This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PRESENTED TO THE LIBRARY

BY

~~PROFESSOR~~ MISS H. E. FIEDLER

Fiedler J. 975

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE SORROWS OF WERTER.

A GERMAN STORY.

——*Tædet cœli convexa tueri.*

——TO EACH HIS SUFFERINGS——

Gray. Ode to Adversity.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY G. WILSON, 1787.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

THOSE who expect a Novel will be disappointed in this work, which contains few characters and few events; and the design of which is to exhibit a picture of that disordered state of mind, too common in our own country. It is drawn by the masterly hand of Mr. Goethe, *and is perhaps little more than the relation of a fact which happened within his knowledge. It went through several editions in German, and soon made its way into France where it had the honour of being translated by its accomplished Queen. About two years since the English translator met with it; and being struck with the uncommon genius and originality of the thoughts, and the energy with which they are expressed, translated some of the letters from the French; and led on by the beauty of the work, which encreased in proportion as it was attended to, the whole was insensibly finished; and as no translation from the German has hitherto appeared, it is now offered to the Public.*

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

Among the number of pamplets which this little work gave occaſion to, there were not wanting ſome which cenſured it; and Mr. Goethe *has been called the apologiſt of Suicide by thoſe who, not diſtinguiſhing the* Author *from the Work, very abſurdly aſcribed to him the erroneous ſentiment which he has given to his principal; —a method of criticiſm which would equally affect all the epic and tragic writers that ever exiſted.*

WERTER *appears to have been ſtrongly impreſſed with ſentiments of religion; and it is not to be wondered at, that in his ſtate of mind they ſhould take an irregular form, and ſometimes border upon extravagance. A few expreſſions which had this appearance, have been omitted by the French, and a few more by the Engliſh tranſlator, as they might poſſibly give offence in a work of this nature.*

WERTER

Digitized by Google

THE SORROWS OF WERTER.

LETTER I.

MAY 4.

I AM glad that I went away.----Could I leave you, my companion, my friend, that I might be more at eaſe? The heart of man is inexplicable. But you forgive me, I know you do. The connections I had formed, were they not ſufficient to torment ſuch a diſpoſition as mine? Poor Eleanora! But am I to be blamed for the tenderneſs which took poſſeſſion of her heart, whilſt I was admiring the beauty of her ſiſter? No! ſurely I am innocent: yet perhaps not entirely ſo: I might encourage her affection, and you have ſeen me pleaſed, amuſed with the ſimple expreſſion of her tenderneſs. Many cauſes might I find of reproach; but I pro-

Digitized by Google

mise you to desist my dear friend. I will not always be looking back and dwelling on the painful remembrance of the sufferings I have endured. I will enjoy the present and forget the past. You are certainly in the right; that fatal disposition which makes us recal past scenes and past sorrows, greatly adds to the number of the wretched.

Be so good to tell my mother that I am employed about her affairs, and that I shall soon write to give her an account of them. I have seen my aunt, instead of being ill-tempered and malevolent, as she was represented to me, she is the most chearful agreeable woman you ever saw, and has the best heart in the world. I explained to her my mother's wrongs, with regard to that part of her portion which has been kept back. She told me the motives for her own conduct, and the terms upon which she is very willing to give up the whole, and do more than we have asked. But I will say no more on the subject at present; only assure my mother, that every thing will go on well. I find on this occasion, as on many others, that neglect and misunderstanding create more trouble and uneasiness, than dishonesty and malice; and they are, indeed, much more frequent also.

I am very well pleased with my situation here. Solitude in this terrestrial paradise is a medcine to my mind. The delight of spring touches my heart, and gives fresh vigour to my soul. Every tree, every bush,

Digitized by Google

is full of flowers, and a delicious perfume fills the air. The town itself is disagreeable; but the finest kind of country, and the greatest natural beauties, are in its environs. Upon one of the neighbouring hills, which form a chain, and diversify our landscape, the late Marquis of M. made a garden: it is simple, and at first sight it is easy to perceive that it was not laid out by a gardener, but by a man of taste and feeling for his own enjoyment. I have already given some tears to the memory of its departed master, in an arbour that is now almost in ruins, which was his favourite spot, and is at present mine. I shall soon have entire possession of this garden; the gardner is in my interest, and he won't be a loser by it.

LETTER II.

MAY 10.

MY mind is calm and serene, like the first fine mornings of spring. Solitude and tranquility, in a country so suited to a disposition like mine, give me an enjoyment of life. Life itself is happiness, and the pleasure of mere existence so entirely absorbs me, that I neglect my talents; I don't draw, I can't make a stroke with the pencil, and yet I am a greater painter than ever. Thin undulating vapours are spread over the plain;

Digitized by Google

thick tufted trees defend me from the meridian sun, which only checkers my shade with a few rays. Here extended on the long grass near the fall of a brook, I admire the infinite variety of plants, and grow familiar with all the little insects that surround me, as they hum amongst the flowers, or creep in the grass. Then I feel the divine breath of that all-powerful Being which created us; whose eternal love supports and comforts us. A darkness spreads over my eyes; heaven and earth seem to dwell in my soul and absorb all its powers, like the idea of a beloved mistress. Oh! that I could express, that I could describe, these great conceptions, with the same warmth, with the same energy, that they are impressed on my soul! but the sublimity of them astonishes and overpowers me.

LETTER III.

MAY 12.

FAIRIES and Genii hover over my steps, or the most lively imagination influences my senses and fills my heart. All Paradise is before me. Here is a fountain to which I am attached by a sort of inchantment, like Melusina and her sisters. It is a spring of pure and clear water, which gushes

Digitized by Google

from the rock, in a cave at the bottom of one of the hills; about twenty rough steps lead to it; the high trees which hang over it, the cool refreshing air of the place, every thing is agreeable, interesting, striking. I never fail to go to it every day, and generally pass an hour there. The young girls come from the town to fetch water from it - -innocent and necessary employment, and formerly the occupation of kings daughters. The time of the patriarchs presents itself to my imagination. I see our ancestors concluding treaties and making alliances by the side of fountains, propitious angels bearing witness. Whoever does not enter into these sensations my dear friend, has never really enjoyed cool repose by the side of a spring after a long summer's walk.

LETTER IV.

MAY 13.

YOU offer me books; I will have nothing to do with them: for heaven's sake dont send me any. I don't wish to be again guided, heated, agitated. Alas! my heart is of itself too much agitated already. I want strains that may lull me; and Homer furnishes them in abundance. Often have I strove to calm the blood that seemed boiling

in my veins; often have I endeavoured to ſtop the keen and ſudden paſſions of my heart ---But 'tis not to you that I need explain its feelings; you have often ſeen with concern my quick tranſitions from ſorrow to immoderate joy, and from ſoft melancholy to violent and dangerous paſſions. My heart is like a ſick child; and like a ſick child I let it have its way:---But that between ourſelves; for I know I ſhould be blamed for it.

LETTER V.

MAY 15.

I AM already very much known and beloved by all the common people here, particularly the children. At firſt when I took notice of them and ſpoke to them, they anſwered me rather roughly, and thought I meant to inſult them. However, I was not diſcourrged; but I found the truth of an obſervation I had often made before---that people of condition keep their inferiors at a great diſtance, as if the they could loſe their dignity by coming near them. It is only a ſchoolboy's wantonneſs, or very poor pretence to wit, which could poſſibly make any body affect to deſcend to the ſame level with their inferiors, in order afterwards to

Digitized by Google

treat them with contempt and ridicule. I know that we are not, nor cannot be all equal; but whoever keeps aloof from the people, in order to gain reſpect, I look upon as a coward, who hides himſelf leſt he ſhould not be able to ſtand before his adverſary.

The laſt time I was at the fountain, I found a young woman on the ſteps, with her pail ſtanding by her, waiting till ſomebody came who might help her to put it on her head. "Shall I help you, my dear?" I ſaid. "Oh! no! Sir," ſhe anſwered, colouring. "Make no ceremony," ſaid I, and helped her to lift the pail; ſhe thanked me, and went up the ſteps.

LETTER VI.

MAY 17.

I HAVE made many acquaintance here: but I have as yet no ſociety. I don't know what it is in me that can attract the inhabitants of this city; but they ſeek me, attach themſelves to me, and then I am ſorry that I can go no further with them. You aſk me, what ſort of people they are here? Juſt ſuch, my dear friend, as are to be met with every where elſe. Men are much the ſame. The generality are forced to labour the greateſt part of their time, merely to procure nou-

Digitized by Google

riſhment; and the ſmall portion that remains is ſo irkſome to them, that they are contriving every method in their power to get rid of it. Such is the lot of man!

However, there is a ſort of people, very good, and very amiable, with whom I often forget myſelf, and am diſſipated enough to enjoy a great deal of that pleaſure which is natural to us. A chearful meal, a neat table, gaiety with frankneſs and openneſs of heart, a walk, a dance, and other little amuſements in their company, have a good effect on my diſpoſition: but then it is neceſſary that I ſhould forget thoſe other qualities in me which lie dormant, uſeleſs: and which I am even obliged carefully to conceal from them. Alas! this idea ſinks my ſpirits! and yet, my dear friend, 'tis the fate of all that are like me, not to be underſtood.

Why have I no longer the friend of my youth? or why did I ever know her? I might ſay to myſelf, "Werter, it is a vain purſuit; thou art ſeeking what is not to be found!" But I had found it; I did find and know an exalted mind, which raiſed me beyond myſelf, and made me all that I am capable of being. All the powers of my ſoul were extended, and the deep ſentiment which nature engraved on my heart, was unfolded. What an intercourſe! Our ideas, our expreſſions, were thoſe of nature; and the pureſt affection warmed our hearts: and now ---but ſhe was before me in the career; ſhe is gone, and has left me alone in the world.

Digitized by Google

Her memory will be ever dear to my heart Oh! I can never forget the ſtrength of her mind, and the indulgence of her temper.

A few days ſince I met with Mr. V. an agreeable young man, with a very pleaſing countenance. He is lately come from the univerſity; and does not think himſelf a prodigy, though he may perhaps ſee his ſuperiority to many that he meets with. Indeed he appears to have applied a good deal, and has acquired much knowledge. Having heard that I underſtood Greek, and could draw, (two very extraordinary things in this country) he came immediately to ſee me, and diſplayed his whole ſtock of literature, from Batteux to Wood, and from De Piles to Winkelmann; aſſured me he had read all the firſt part of Sultzer's Theory, and was in poſſeſſion of a manuſcript of De Heyne's on the Study of the Antique. I forgave him all this.

I am become acquainted too with a very worthy man, who is ſteward to the prince; he is free and open in his manner, and loves ſociety. I am told that nothing is more pleaſing than to ſee him ſurrounded by his family. He has nine children; and the eldeſt daughter is much talked of and admired. He gave me an invitation to his houſe, and I intend going the firſt opportunity. He is about a league and a half from hence, at a hunting lodge which the prince gave him leave to inhabit, after the loſs of his wife: he loved her extremely, and could not bear

Digitized by Google

to continue in the ſteward's houſe where ſhe died.

I have beſides fallen in with ſome ridiculous people, or rather they have put themſelves in my way. Every thing in them is inſupportable; but worſt of all are their profeſſions of friendſhip. Adieu. I think this letter muſt pleaſe you; it is all hiſtorical.

LETTER VII.

MAY 22.

THAT life is but a dream is the opinion of many; and it is alſo mine. When I ſee the narrow limits which confine the penetrating active genius of man; when I ſee, that all his powers are waſted to ſatisfy mere neceſſities, the only end of which is to prolong a miſerable exiſtence; that our ſeeming care, with regard to certain enquiries, is but a blind reſignation, and that we only amuſe ourſelves with painting brilliant figures and ſmiling landſcapes on the walls of our priſon, whilſt we ſee on all ſides of us the boundary which confines us: when I conſider theſe things, my dear friend, I am ſilent: I examine myſelf; and what do I find? Alas! more vague deſires, preſages, and viſions, than I find of conviction, truth, and reality: then all is chaos and confuſion before my

Digitized by Google

eyes; and dreaming like others, I let myself be carried away by the ſtream.

All wiſe inſtitutors and learned teachers agree that children are ignorant of the cauſe that excites their will. But that the great children, as well as the little ones, ſhould wander upon this earth, without knowing whence they came, or whither they go; without any certain motives for their conduct, but guided, like them, by buiſcuits, ſugar plumbs, and rods; this is what nobody is willing to acknowledge, and yet nothing, I think, can be evident.

I foreſee what you will ſay in anſwer to this; and allow, that the happieſt amongſt us are thoſe, who, like children, think not of the morrow, amuſe themſelves with playthings, dreſs and undreſs their dolls, watch with great reſpect before the cupboard, where mama keeps the ſweetmeats; and when they get any, eat them directly, and cry for more. Theſe are certainly happy beings. Many alſo are to be envied, who dignify their paltry employments, ſometimes even their paſſions, with pompous titles, and who repreſent themſelves to mankind as beings of a ſuperior order, whoſe occupation it is to promote their welfare and glory. But the man who in all humility acknowledges the vanity of all theſe things; obſerves with what pleaſure the wealthy citizen transforms his garden into paradiſe; with what patience poor a man bears his burthen; and that all wiſh equally to behold the ſun yet a little longer; he too may be at

Digitized by Google

peace; he creates a world of his own, and is happy alſo becauſe he is a man; but however limited his ſphere, he preſerves in his boſom the idea of liberty, and feels that he has it in his power to quit his priſon.

LETTER VIII.

MAY 26.

YOU know my way of chooſing a little favourite ſpot: how I make my arrangements, and ſettle myſelf in it. I have found one here which entirely ſuits me.

About a league from the town is a place called Walheim. It is very agreeably ſituated on the ſide of a hill; from one of the paths which lead out of the village, you have a view of the whole country; and there is a good old woman who ſells wine, coffee, and tea, there: but better than all this are two lime-trees before the church, which ſpread their branches over a little green, ſurrounded by barns and cottages. I have ſeen few places more retired and peaceful. I ſend for a chair and table from the old woman's, and there I drink my coffee, and read Homer. It was by accident that I diſcovered this place one fine afternoon: all was perfect ſtillneſs; every body was in the fields, except a little boy about four years old, who was ſitting on the ground, and holding be-

Digitized by Google

tween his knees a child of about six months; he pressed it to his bosom with his little arms, which made a sort of great chair for it, and notwithstanding the vivacity which sparkled in his black eyes, he sat perfectly still. Quite delighted with the scene, I sat down on a plough opposite, and had great pleasure in drawing this little picture of brotherly tenderness. I added a bit of the hedge, the barn-door, and some broken cart-wheels, without any order, just as they happened to lie; and in about an hour, I found I had made a drawing of great expression, and very correct design, without having put in any thing of my own. This confirmed me in the resolution I had before made, only to copy Nature for the future. Nature is inexhaustible, and alone forms the greatest masters. What is alledged in favour of rules, is nearly the same as what is said in favour of the laws of society: an artist formed upon them, will never produce any thing absolutely bad or disgusting; as a man who obeys the laws, and observes decorum, can never be a decided villain, or a very intolerable neighbour. But yet, say what you will of rules, they alter the true features, and the natural expression. You will tell me, that they only lop off superfluous branches, and prevent the extravagant. Let us compare talents to love, my dear friend. Let us suppose a man attached to a young woman, dedicating to her every hour of the day, wearing his health, lavishing his fortune, to convince her each mo-

Digitized by Google

ment that he is entirely devoted to her. Then comes a man of cold and correct underſtanding; a man who acts perhaps in a public character; and this very reſpectable perſon ſays to him, "My young friend, love is a natural paſſion, but it ſhould be kept within due bounds: make a proper diviſion of your income, and out of the ſuperfluity make preſents to her, but that only from time to time, on her birth-day, or ſuch like occaſions." If the young man takes this advice, he may be a very uſeful member of ſociety, extremely ſerviceable to his prince; but as to his love it is annihilated; and if he is an artiſt, his genious is fled. Oh! my friend, the torrent of genius would not be ſo confined in its courſe; its impetuous waves would riſe and aſtoniſh us; but that cold and narrow-minded men have taken poſſeſſion of the two ſhores; they have built houſes and planted gardens on its banks; they tremble for their little habitations, and dig trenches, and raiſe dams, to prevent the danger which threatens them.

LETTER IX.

MAY 27.

I FELL into declamation and ſimilies, I find; and my enthuſiaſm made me forget to finiſh my narrative. Quite loſt in my ideas

Digitized by Google

of painting, which I unfolded to you at large in my laſt letter, I ſat for two hours upon the plough, and towards evening a young woman with a baſket on her arm, came running to the children, who had not moved in all that time. "You are a very good boy Philip," ſhe called out. I got up and went towards her, and aſked if ſhe was the mother of thoſe pretty children; ſhe anſwered, that ſhe was, gave the eldeſt a cake, took the little one in her arms, and kiſſed it with a mother's tenderneſs. "I left the young child with Philip," ſaid ſhe, "while I went to the town with his brother to buy ſome white bread, ſome ſugar and an earthen pot to make broth for Jenny to night; the boys broke our earthen pot yeſterday as they were quarrelling for the meat." I enquired where her other ſon was: and whilſt ſhe was telling me that he was driving home two geeſe, he came ſkipping up to us, and gave Philip an ozier twig. I continued talking with the mother, and found ſhe was the ſchoolmaſter's daughter, and that her huſband was gone to Holland upon the death of an uncle he had there. "My huſband found he ſhould be cheated of his inheritance," ſaid ſhe; "for he wrote and received no anſwers to his letters, and ſo he went himſelf. I have not heard of him ſince he ſet out. God grant that no harm may have happened to him!" I left this good woman with regret, gave her a creutzer to buy white bread for little Jenny when ſhe went next to town and a creut-

Digitized by Google

a piece to the boys, and so we parted.

Yes, my dear friend, when I am no longer master of myself, nothing is more calculated to appease the tumult of my senses, than the sight of such a tranquil being, she moves with a happy thoughtlessness in the confined circle of her existence; day after day passes without disquietude; and the falling leaves raise no idea, but that of approaching winter.

Since that first evening I have gone very often to the same place: the children are become familiar with me; they have a bit of sugar when I drink coffee, and at night they partake of my whey and bread and butter. On Sunday they regularly receive their creutzer; for if I am not there after evening service, the old woman has orders to make the distribution.

They are quite at their ease with me; tell me all they hear and their simplicity pleases me much. Their mother used perpetually be calling out, to tell them they would be troublesome to the gentleman; and it is with great difficulty I have at length prevailed upon her to let them alone.

LETTER X.

JUNE 16.

WHY don't I write to you?—Do you pretend to penetration, and ask such a ques-

Digitized by Google

tion? You ſhould have gueſſed that I was well, but that—in a word, I had found a perſon that is ſtill nearer to my heart—that I had found—I know not what I have found.

Regularly to give you an account how I learned to diſtinguiſh the moſt amiable of women, would be difficult. I am contented, happy; and conſequently a bad hiſtorian.

I muſt not call her an angel; that, you will tell me, every body ſays of the woman he loves: and yet I cannot deſcribe to you how perfect ſhe is, nor why ſhe has captivated all my ſenſes.

So much ſimplicity, with ſuch an underſtanding; ſo mild, and yet ſo animated: a mind ſo placid, and a life ſo active. But all theſe are only the common-place phraſes of abſtract ideas, and don't expreſs a ſingle character or feature. Some other time.—But it muſt be now or never. For between ourſelves, I have, ſince I began my letter, been ſeveral times going to throw down my pen and fly to her: I made a vow not to go thither this morning: and I run every moment to the window to ſee if the ſun is ſtill high.

I was not able to hold out; I went there: I am now returned; and whilſt I am eating my bread and butter, will write to you, my dear friend. Nothing can be more touching than to ſee her in the midſt of her little family. But if I go on in this manner, you will know no more at the end of my letter, than you do at the beginning. Be all attention

Digitized by Google

then: for I shall endeavour to give some method and order to my relation, and enter into a great many details.

I wrote you word some time ago, that I had made an acquaintance with Mr. J. the prince's steward; and that he had invited me to go and see him in his retirement, or rather in his little kingdom. I neglected going, however; and perhaps should never have gone if chance had not discovered to me the hidden treasure which it contained.

Some of our young men proposed a little dance in the country, in which I very readily joined. I chose a good pretty girl for my partner, and rather agreeable too, but nothing very striking; and it was agreed that I should take a coach, and with my partner and her aunt, should call upon Charlotte, and carry her to the ball. "You will see a very charming girl," said the young lady, when she came into the avenue which leads to the hunting-lodge, "And take care you don't fall in love with her," added her aunt. "Why?" said I "Because she it engaged to a very worthy man," she replied, "who is now gone to settle his affairs upon the death of his father, and solicit a very lucrative employment." This intelligence appeared a matter of great indifference to me. When we arrived at the gate, the sun was sunk near the tops of the mountains, the air was heavy, and low black clouds seemed to be gathering in the horizon. The women began to be apprehensive, and I foresaw myself a great probability of our

Digitized by Google

party being interrupted; but, in order to give them comfort, I put on a sagacious look, and assured them the weather would be fine.

I got out of the coach. A maid came down, and desired us to wait one minute for her mistress. I crossed the court, went up stairs, and as I entered the apartment I saw six children, the eldest of which was but eleven years old, all jumping round a young woman, very elegantly shaped, and dressed in a plain white gown with pink ribbands. She had a brown loaf in her hand, and was cutting slices of bread and butter, which she distributed in a graceful and affectionate manner among the children, according to their age and appetite. Each held up its little hands all the time the slice was cutting, thanked Charlotte when he received it and then ran to the door to see the company, and look at the coach which was come to fetch her. "I beg pardon," she said, "for having given you the trouble to come up, and am sorry to make the ladies wait; but dressing and some family business, made me forget to give my children their little meal, and they don't like to receive it from any body else. I muttered something, I don't know what—my whole soul was taken up with her air, her voice, her manner; and before I could recover myself, she ran into her room for her gloves and fan. Whilst she was gone the little ones eyed me askance. I went up to the youngest, who has a most pleasing countenance; he drew back, and Charlotte

Digitized by Google

just then coming in, said, "Lewis, shake hands with your cousin." The little fellow held out his hand very readily, and I gave him a kiss. "My cousin," said I to the amiable Charlotte as I handed her down, "do you think I deserve the happiness of being related to you?" She archly replied, "Oh! I have such a number of cousins, I should be sorry you were the most undeserving of the whole set." When Charlotte took leave of them, she desired Sophy, who was the eldest of those left at home, to take great care of the children, and to go to her papa when he returned from walking. She told the little ones to mind their sister Sophy as much as if it was herself; and some promised faithfully that they would: but a little fair girl, about six years old, looked rather discontented and said, "but she an't Charlotte though for all that, and, Charlotte, we love you best." During this time the two eldest boys had got up behind the coach, and at my request she gave them leave to go to the end of the wood, upon condition that they would sit very still and hold fast.

We had but just seated ourselves in the carriage, talked about the new fashions and the little hats, and the company we were to meet at the ball, when Charlotte stopped the coach, and made her brothers get down. They would kiss her hand again before they went: the eldest shewed all the tender attention of a boy of fifteen, and the youngest a great deal of warmth and affection. She de-

Digitized by Google

fred them again to give her love to the children; and we drove on.

The old lady asked her if she had read the book she had last sent to her. "I cannot say I have," said Charlotte, "and I will return it to you. I confess I was not pleased with that any more than with the first which you sent me." Imagine my surprise, when having asked the title, she told me it was ———. Penetration and judgment appeared in every thing she said; each expression seemed to light up her features with new charms and new rays of genius, which were unfolded by degrees as she found herself understood.

"When I was very young," she added, "I loved romances better than any thing in the world." Nothing could equal my delight when I got into a corner on a holiday, and entered with my whole heart and soul into all the joy or sorrow of a Miss Jenny. I confess that sort of reading has still some charms for me; but as I don't read much, the books I do read, should be suited to my taste. I prefer the authors who don't carry me to scenes too far removed from my own situation in life, but where I may suppose myself and those that are about me, and whose stories are interesting, touching, like the life I lead in the bosom of my family; which, without being absolutely paradise, is a continual source of satisfaction and delight." I endeavoured to conceal the emotion which these last words occasioned; and it did no

Digitized by Google

laſt long, for after ſhe had given her opinion of the Vicar of Wakefield, &c. &c. with equal juſtice and diſcernment, I could hold no longer; and I began with great eagerneſs to tell her what were my own thoughts on the ſubjects. After ſome time, when Charlotte at length addreſſed herſelf to the other two ladies, I juſt perceived that they were ſtill in the coach. The old lady looked at me ſeveral times with an air of raillery, which however I did not at all mind.

We then talked of dancing. "If it is a fault to love dancing," ſaid ſhe, "I will freely own that I am extremely guilty; no amuſement is more agreeable to me. If any thing diſturbs me, I go to my harpſicord, play ſome of the lively airs I have danced to, and all is forgotten." You know me, and will figure to yourſelf my countenance whilſt ſhe was ſpeaking.—My looks ſtedfaſtly fixed upon her fine black eyes: my very ſoul attached to her's and ſeizing her ideas ſo ſtrongly, that I hardly heard the words which expreſſed them. At length I got out of the coach like one that dreams; and I found myſelf in the aſſembly-room, without knowing how I came there.

They began with minuets. I took out one lady after another, and exactly thoſe who were the moſt diſagreeable yet could not bring themſelves to leave off. Charlotte and her partner began an Engliſh country dance. Imagine my delight when they came to do the figure with us. You ſhould ſee Charlotte:

Digitized by Google

she seems to dance with all her heart and soul, and as if she was born for nothing else; her figure is all elegance, lightness and grace. I asked her to dance the second country dance with me; she was engaged, but promised herself to me for the third; telling me at the same time, with the most agreeable freedom, that she was very fond of allemandes. "It is the custom here," said she, "for every couple to dance the allemandes together; but my partner will be delighted if I save him the trouble, for he does the waltz very ill; I observe the lady you dance with is in the same situation. I am sure by your English country dances that you must do the waltz very well yourself, so that if it is agreeable to you to dance the allemandes with me, do you propose it to my partner; I will propose it to your's. We went to settle this affair; and it was agreed that during the allemandes, Charlotte's partner should attend upon mine.

We began: and at first amused ourselves with making every possible turn with our arms. How graceful and animated all her motions! When the waltz commenced, all the couples, which were whirling round, at first jostled against each other. We very judiciously kept aloof till the awkward and clumsy had withdrawn; when we joined in there were but two couples left. I never in my life was so active; I was more than mortal. To hold in my arms the most lovely of women, to fly with her like the wind, and

Digitized by Google

loſe ſight of every other object!—But I owe to you, I then determined, that the woman I loved, and to whom I had pretenſions, ſhould never do the walſe with any other man.—You will underſtand this.

We took a few turns in the room to recover our breath; and then Charlotte ſat down, and I brought her a few ſlices of lemon, all indeed that were left, which I ſtole from thoſe who was making the negus: ſhe eat ſome with ſugar, and to be refreſhed by them; but I was obliged in politeneſs to offer them to the lady who ſat next Charlotte, and ſhe very injudiciouſly took ſome.

We were the ſecond couple in the third country dance. As we were going down (and heaven knows with what extacy I looked at her arms, and her eyes which bore the impreſſion of a natural and lively pleaſure) a lady of a certain age, whoſe agreeable countenance had ſtruck me at firſt ſight, looked at Charlotte and ſmiled; then held up her finger in a threatening attitude, and in a very ſignificant tone of voice, ſaid, "Albert! Albert!

"Who is this Albert," ſaid I to Charlotte, "if it is not impertinent?" She was going to anſwer, when we were obliged to ſeparate for hands ſix round at bottom; and in croſſing over I thought I perceived that ſhe looked penſive. "Why ſhould I conceal it from you?" ſaid ſhe, when ſhe gave me her hand to lead out of ſides, "Albert is a worthy man to whom I am engaged," I had been

Digitized by Google

told this before by the ladies in the coach, but I had not then seen Charlotte; I did not know her value. I seemed to hear it for the first time. I was distressed, confused, wrong in the figure, and put every body out; and Charlotte, by pushing one and pulling another, with great difficulty set us right again.

Whilst we were dancing, the lightning, which had been for some time seen in the horizon, and which I had declared to be only summer lightning, and proceeded entirely from heat, became much more violent, and the thunder was heard through all the noise of the fiddles. Three ladies run out of the set; their partners followed; the confusion became general, and the music stopped. When any distress or terror comes upon us in a scene of amusement, it has a stronger effect on our minds, either because the contrast makes us feel it more keenly: or rather perhaps, because our senses being open to impressions of all kinds, the shock is more forcibly and quickly perceived. This circumstance may account in some measure for the extraordinary contortions and shrieks of the ladies. One of the most courageous sat down with her back to the window and stopped her ears; another knelt down before her and hid her face in her lap; a third shoved herself between them, and embraced her little sister, shedding at the same time a torrent of tears: some insisted upon going home; others still more distressed did not attend to their indiscreet partners, who were stealing from their

Digitized by Google

lips those sighs that were addressed to heaven. Some of the gentlemen went down stairs to drink a bottle quietly; and the rest of the company very willingly followed the mistress of the house, who had the good sense to conduct us to a room darkened by close window shutters. As soon as we came into it, Charlotte drew the chairs round, made us sit down in a ring, and was eager to begin with some little play.

More than one of our belles drew up and looked prim, in hopes of some agreeable consequences from the forfeits. "Let us play at counting," said Charlotte, "Observe, I am to go from right to left; you are to count one after the other as you sit, and count fast: whoever stops or mistakes is to have a box on the ear, and so on till we have counted to a thousand." It was pleasant to see her go round with her hand up. "One," says the first, "two," the second, "three," the third, and so on till Charlotte went faster and faster. One then mistook; instantly a box on the ear: the next laughed instead of saying the following number—another box on the ear; and still faster and faster. I had two for my share; I fancied they were harder than the rest, and was much delighted. A general confusion and laughter put an end to the play long before we got to a thousand. The storm ceased; the company formed into little parties; Charlotte returned to the assembly room, and I followed her. As we were going, she said,

Digitized by Google

"The blows I inflicted made them forget their apprehensions; I myself was as much afraid as any body, but by affecting courage to keep up the spirits of the company, I really lost my fears." We went to the window; and still heard the thunder at a distance; a soft rain watered the fields, and filled the air with the most delightful and refreshing smells. Leaning upon her arm, Charlotte fixed her eyes upon the country before us, then raised them to heaven, and then turned them upon me; they were wet: she put her hand upon mine and said, "Klopstock!" I was oppressed with the sensations I then felt; I sunk under the weight of them; I bent down upon her hand, and wetted it with my tears; as I raised myself I looked steadfastly in her face. Divine Klopstock! why didst thou not see thy apotheosis in those eyes? And thy name so often profaned, why is it ever pronounced by any voice but Charlotte's?

LETTER XII

JUNE 19.

I FORGOT where I broke off my narration; I recollect nothing about it: all I know is, that it was two in the morning when

Digitized by Google

I went to bed, and if I could have talked to you instead of writing to you, I should certainly have kept you till day light.

I believe I did not tell you what passed in our return from the ball, and to-day I have not time neither. There was a beautiful sunrising; the whole country was refreshed, and the rain fell drop by drop from the trees in the forest.

Our companions were asleep: Charlotte asked me if I did not wish to sleep too? and desired I would not make any ceremony on her account. Looking stedfastly at her I answered, "As long as those eyes continue open, I cannot close mine."

We both remained awake till we came to her door: the maid opened it softly, and answered to Charlotte's enquires, that every body was well and still in bed. I left her, promising to see her again in the course of the day. I kept my word, and since that time, sun, moon, and stars, may rise and set as they will; I know not whether it is day or whether it is night; the whole world is now nothing to me.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XIII.

MY days are as happy as those which are reserved for the Elect; and whatever may be my fate hereafter, I will never say that I have not tasted of happiness, and the purest happiness of life. You know Walheim; I am now entirely settled there: there I am but half a league from Charlotte; there I enjoy myself, and all the pleasure that a mortal is capable of. When I chose Walheim for the end of my walks, I little thought that all heaven was so near it.—How many times, in my long rambles, have I seen this hunting lodge, which now contains the object of all my vows, sometimes from the top of the hill, sometimes from the meadow on the opposite side of the river.

I have often reflected on the desire men have to extend themselves, and to make new discoveries; and upon that secret impulse, which afterwards inclines them to return to their circle, to conform to the laws of custom, and to embarrass themselves no longer with what passes either to the right or to the left.

When I first came here, and from the top of the hill contemplated the beauties of this vale, you cannot imagine how I was at-

Digitized by Google

tracted by every thing I saw round me. The little wood opposite, how delightful to sit under its shade! how fine the view from that point of the rock! how agreeable might one wander in those close valleys, and amongst those broken hills! I went and came without having found what I wished. Distance, my dear friend, is like futurity; a darkness is placed before us, and the perceptions of our mind are as obscure as distant objects are to our sight. We ardently wish for a warm and noble energy which might take possession of our souls; we would sacrifice our whole being to be filled with such a sentiment.

So the most determined traveller returns at length to his country, and finds in his own cottage, in the arms of his wife, in the society of his children, and in the labour necessary to maintain them, all the happiness which he sought for in vain in the vast deserts of the world.

When I go to Walheim at sun-rise, gather my own pease, and sit in a corner to shell them, and read Homer; when I go into the little kitchen and make a soup of them, I figure to myself the illustrious lovers of Penelope killing and dressing their own meat. All descriptions of the patriarchal life give me the most calm and agreeable ideas; and now thank Heaven, I can compare to it the life I now lead myself. Happy is it for me that my heart is capable of feeling the same simple and innocent pleasure, as the peasant

Digitized by Google

who sees on his table the cabbage he has raised with his own hand; and who not only enjoys his meal, but remembers also, with delight, the fine morning in which he planted it, and the soft evenings in which he watered it, and the pleasure he had in seeing it grow and flourish.

LETTER XIV.

THE day before yesterday the physician came from town to make a visit at the steward's. He found me upon the floor, playing with Charlotte's children; we were tickling one another, and romping and making a great noise. The doctor is very formal and very solemn: adjusts the plates of his ruffles whilst he is discoursing with you, and draws his chitterling up to his chin. He thought this conduct of mine very much beneath the dignity of man: I perceived it by his countenance; but I nevertheless continued to rebuild the houses of cards which the children had blown down. He told every body when he went back, that the steward's children were spoiled enough before, but that now Werter entirely ruined them.

Nothing touches me more than children, my dear friend, when I consider them, and observe in the little beings the seeds of all

Digitized by Google

thoſe virtues and qualities which will one day be ſo neceſſary to them; when I ſee in the obſtinate, all the future firmneſs and conſtancy of a great and noble character; in the capricious, that levity and gaiety of temper which will make them lightly paſs over the dangers and ſorrows of life; and when I ſee them all openneſs and ſimplicity, then I call to mind the divine words of our teacher, "If you do not become like one of theſe—" And theſe children who are our equals, and whom we ought to look upon as our models, we treat them like ſubjects; they are to have no will of their own—Have we then none ourſelves? and whence comes this excluſive right—Is it becauſe we are older and more experienced? Great god? from the height of thy glory thou beholdeſt great children and little children (there are no other) and thou haſt long ſince declared to which thou giveſt the preference! But it has alſo been long ſince declared, that they believe in him, and do not hear him; and their children are after their own image, &c.

Adieu, my dear friend: I will not bewilder myſelf upon this ſubject any longer.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XV.

JULY.

CHARLOTTE will ſpend ſome time in town: ſhe is with a very deſerving woman, who has been given over by her phyſicians, and who wiſhed to have Charlotte with her in her laſt moments. What conſolation ſhe is capable of giving to the ſick, I have myſelf experienced, for my heart is much diſeaſed. I went with her laſt week to ſee the vicar of S—; a ſmall village in the mountains, about a league from hence. We got there about four o'clock; Charlotte's little ſiſter went with us. When we came into the court, which is ſhaded by two fine walnut trees, the good old man was ſitting upon his bench. At ſight of Charlotte, he forgot his old age and oaken ſtick, and ventured to walk towards her. She ran to him, and made him ſit down again, ſat down by him, preſented a thouſand compliments to him from her father, and played with the youngeſt of his children, the amuſement of his old age, though it was rather dirty and diſagreeable. I wiſh you could have ſeen her attention to this good old man; I wiſh you could have heard her raiſing her voice becauſe he is a little deaf, and telling him of young and healthy people who had died when it leaſt could have been expected;

Digitized by Google

commending the virtues of the Carlſtadt waters, and approving his intention of going thither the next ſummer; and aſſuring him ſhe thought he looked better than he did the laſt time ſhe ſaw him. During this time I paid my compliments and talked to his wife. The old man ſeemed quite in ſpirits; and as I could not help admiring the beauty of his walnut trees, which formed ſuch an agreeable ſhade over our heads, he began to give us the hiſtory of them: "As to the oldeſt," ſaid he, "we don't know who planted it; ſome ſay one clergyman, and ſome ſay another; as to the youngeſt it is exactly the age of my wife; it will be fifty years old next October; her father planted it in the morning, and towards evening ſhe came into the world. My wife's father was my predeceſſor here, and I cannot expreſs to you how fond he was of this tree; it is certainly not leſs dear to me. Upon a log of wood, under this ſame tree, my wife was ſitting and knitting when I came into this court the firſt time, five and twenty years ago." Charlotte enquired after his daughter: he ſaid ſhe was gone with Mr. Smith into the meadows to ſee the hay-making. He then reſumed his hiſtory, and told us how he got into the good graces of his predeceſſor, and of his daughter; how he became firſt his curate and then his ſucceſſor; and he had ſcarcely finiſhed his ſtory, when his daughter returned with Mr. S. and affectionately ſaluted Charlotte. She has a clear brown complexion, is well

Digitized by Google

made, lively, and a sensible worthy man might pass his time very happily with her in the country. Her lover, for such Mr. Smith immediately appeared to be, has an agreeable person, but was very reserved and would not join in conversation notwithstanding all the endeavours of Charlotte for that purpose. I was uneasy at it, because I perceived by his countenance that it was not for want of talents, but from caprice and ill humour. It was but too evident afterwards, when we went to take a walk; for whilst I was talking and laughing with the vicar's daughter, the countenance of this gentleman, which before was none of the pleasantest, became so dark and angry, that Charlotte pulled me by the sleeve to make me desist. Nothing concerns me more than to see men torment one another, particularly in the flower of their age in the very season of pleasure, they waste their few short days of sunshine in quarrels and disputes, and only feel their error when it is too late to repair it. This dwelt upon my mind, and during our collation, the conversation upon the happiness and misery of this life, I could not help taking that opportunity to inveigh bitterly against ill-humour. "We are apt," said I, "to complain that we have but few happy days; and it appears to me that we have but very little right to complain. If our hearts were always in a proper disposition to receive the good things which Heaven sends us, we should acquire strength to support the evils

Digitized by Google

when they come upon us." "But," says the vicar's wife, "we cannot always command our tempers; so much depends on the constitution; when the body is ill at ease, the mind is so likewise." "Well let us look upon this disposition as a disease," I answered, "and see if there is no remedy for it." "That is more to the purpose," said Charlotte; "and I think, indeed a great deal might be done in this respect. I know for example, that when any thing disturbs my temper, I go into the garden, sing a lively air; and it vanishes." "That is what I meant," I replied, "ill-humour may be compared to sloth. It is natural to a man to be indolent; but if once we get the better of our indolence, we then go on with alacrity, and find a real pleasure in being active." The daughter listened to me with attention. The young man objected that we were not masters of ourselves, and still less of our feelings. I told him that it was a disagreeable sensation which was in question, and one that every body wished to get rid of; that we don't know how far our strentgh will go till we have tried it; that the sick consult physicians, and submit to the most scrupulous regimen, and the most nauseous medicines to recover their health. I then perceived that the good old man inclined his head to listen to our discourse. I therefore raised my voice, and addressing myself to him, said; "there has been a great deal of preaching against all crimes, Sir; but I dont know that any body has hitherto preached against the spleen."

Digitized by Google

ſpleen." "It is for thoſe who preach in towns," ſaid he, "to diſcourſe on this ſubject, for peaſants don't know what the ſpleen is; though indeed it would not be amiſs to do it here from time to time, if it was only for my wife and the ſteward." We all laughed, and ſo did he very heartily; but it gave him a fit of coughing, which interrupted us for ſome time. Mr. Smith reſumed the ſubject. "You have made this indiſpoſition of temper a crime," ſaid he; "that appears to me to be carrying the matter too far." "It is not, though," I anſwered, "if what is pernicious to ourſelves, and to others, deſerves the name of crime. It is not enough that we are without the power to make one another happy, but muſt we deprive each other of that ſatisfaction, which, left to ourſelves, we might often be capable of enjoying. Shew me the man who has ill-humour, and who hides it; who bears the whole burthen of it himſelf without interrupting the pleaſures of thoſe about him! No; ill-humour ariſes from a conſcioufneſs of our own want of merit; from a diſcontent which always accompanies that envy which fooliſh vanity engenders. We diſlike to ſee people happy, unleſs their happineſs is the work of our own hands." Charlotte looked at me and ſmiled at the heat with which I ſpoke; and ſome tears which I perceived in the eyes of the young woman, inclined me to continue. "Woe unto thoſe," I ſaid, "who make uſe of a power over a human heart, to deprive it of the ſimple

Digitized by Google

pleasure it would naturally enjoy. All the favours, all the attention in the world, cannot for a moment make amends for the loss of that happiness which a cruel tyranny destroys."

My heart was full; some recollections pressed upon my mind, and my eyes were filled with tears.

"We should say to ourselves every day' I exclaimed, "what good can I do to my friends? I can only endeavour not to interrupt them in their pleasures, and try to augment the happiness which I myself partake of. When their souls are tormented by a violent passion, when their hearts are rent with grief, I cannot give them relief for a moment.

"And when at length a fatal malady seizes the unhappy being whose untimely grave was prepared by thy hand—when stretched out and exhausted he raises his dim eyes to heaven and the damps of death are on his brow—then thou standest before him like a condemned criminal; thou seest thy fault, but 'tis too late; thou feelest thy want of power; thou feelest with bitterness, that all thou canst give, all thou canst do will not restore the strength of thy unfortunate victim, nor procure for him a moment of consolation!

In pronouncing these words, the remembrance of a like scene, at which I had been present, came with all its weight upon my heart. I put my handkerchief to my eyes, I got up and left the company. The voice of Charlotte, who called me to go home, made me recollect myself; and in our way

Digitized by Google

back, with what tenderneſs ſhe chid me! how kindly ſhe repreſented to me, that the too eager intereſt, and the heat with which I entered into every thing, would wear me out, and ſhorten my days!—Yes, my angel, I will take care of myſelf; I will live for you.

LETTER XVI.

JULY 6.

CHARLOTTE is ſtill with her dying friend; and is ſtill the ſame, ſtill the ſame kind attentive creature who ſoftens pain, and gives happineſs which ever way ſhe turns. She went out yeſterday with her little ſiſters. I knew it, and went to meet her, and we walked together. In coming back towards the town, we ſtopped at the ſpring I am ſo fond of, and which is become a thouſand times dearer to me now that Charlotte has ſat by the ſide of it. I looked around me, and recalled the time I had paſſed there, when my heart was unoccupied and alone. "Dear ſpring," ſaid I, "I have not ſince that time enjoyed cool repoſe by your freſh ſtream, and often paſſing haſtily by, I have not even ſeen you." I fixed my eyes upon Charlotte, and was ſtruck with a lively ſenſe of all that I poſſeſs in her.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XVII.

JULY 8.

HOW can I be so childish? I depend on every turn and change of countenance. How can I be so childish?—We have been at Walheim; the ladies went in a carriage, but got out to walk. Whilst we were walking, I thought the eyes of Charlotte turned on me—but I was mistaken— I will tell you in two words, for I am dying with sleep. When the ladies got into their coach again, young W. Selftadt, Andran, and myself were talking to them at the window; the young men were gay and full of spirits. I watched Charlotte's eyes; they wandered from one to the other, but did not light on me; upon me who stood there motionless, and who saw nothing but her. My heart was bidding her adieu a thousand and a thousand times, and she did not even look at me. The coach drove off, and a tear was ready to start. I followed her with my eyes; I saw her put her head out of the window. Alas! was it for me that she looked out? I know not; and uncertainty is my comfort, perhaps—Good night—I see my own weakness.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XVIII.

JULY 10.

YOU should see how foolish I look in company when her name is mentioned, when any body talks of her, particularly when they ask me how I like her?——How I *like* her! I detest the phrase. What must the man be who *liked* Charlotte, whose heart and senses were not totally captivated by her?—How I *like* her—A little while ago, I was asked how I *liked* Ossian.

LETTER XIX.

JULY 13.

NO, I am not mistaken—I read in her eyes that she is interested for me; I feel it. And I may believe my own heart, which tells me that she—dare I say it?—Can I pronounce the divine words?—She loves me.

That she loves me! Oh! how the idea exalts me in my own eyes! How—I may tell you, for you are capable of understanding it—how I honour myself since I have been beloved by her! Is it presumption, or is it a

Digitized by Google

conſciouſneſs of the truth? I do not know a man who is capable of ſupplanting me in the heart of Charlotte,—And yet when ſhe ſpeaks of Albert with warmth, with tenderneſs, I feel like an ambitious courtier, who is deprived of his honours and titles; or the ſoldier whoſe ſword is taken from him by his prince.

LETTER XX.

JULY 16.

HOW my heart beats, and my blood boils in my veins, when by accident I touch her finger!—when my feet meet her's under the table, I draw them back with precipitation as from a furnace: but a ſecret power again preſſes me forward, and diſorders all my ſenſes.

Her innocent and eaſy heart does not know that all theſe little marks of confidence and friendſhip make my torment. When ſhe puts her hand upon mine, when in eagerneſs of converſation ſhe comes cloſe to me, and her balmy breath reaches my lips, the ſudden effect of lightening is not ſtronger. Ah! this celeſtial confidence, if ever I ſhould dare—you underſtand me my dear friend; my heart it not ſo corrupt! it is weak, very weak; and is not that a degree of corruption?

Digitized by Google

I look upon her as sacred, and in her presence I desire nothing; when I am near her I am all soul. There is a favourite air of her's which she plays on the harpsicord with the energy of an angel: it is striking, touching, and yet simple. As soon as she begins it, care, sorrow, pain, all is forgotten. I believe I perfectly comprehend all that is related of the magic of ancient music. At times when I am ready to shoot myself, she plays that air, and the darkness which hung over me is dispersed, and I breathe freely again.

LETTER XXI.

JULY 18.

WHAT is the whole world to our hearts without love? it is the optic machine of the Savoyards without light. As soon as the little lamp appears, the figures shine on the whitened wall; and if love only shews us shadows which pass away, yet still we are happy, when, like children, we are transported with the splendid phantoms.

I shall not see Charlotte to-day; company, which I could not avoid, hinders me. What do you think I have done? I sent the little boy who waits upon me, that I might at least see somebody that had been near her.

Digitized by Google

With what impatience I waited for his return, and with what pleasure I saw him! I should certainly have taken him in my arms if I had not been ashamed.

The Bologna stone, when placed in the sun, attracts the rays, and retains them so as to give light a considerable time after it is removed into the dark. The boy was just this to me. The idea that Charlotte's eyes had dwelt on his features, the buttons of his coat, the cape, made all of them so interesting, so dear to me—I would not at that moment have taken a thousand crowns for him, I was so happy to see him!—Beware of laughing at me my good friend; nothing which makes us happy is an illusion.

LETTER XXII.

JULY 19.

AS soon as I opened my window this morning, I said, "To-day I shall see her," and I calmly looked at the sun. I shall see her, and I have no other wish to form for the whole day; all, all is included in that thought.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XXIII.

JULY 20.

I CANNOT yet approve the ſcheme you have of ſending me to the ambaſſador of —— at ——. I don't love ſubordination, and we all know, too that he is a hard diſagreeable man to have any connection with. You ſay my mother wiſhes to have me employed. I could not help laughing at that. —Am I not employed enough? and if it is in ſhelling peaſe and beans, it is in fact the ſame. In this world, all is miſery; and thoſe who in compliance with others are endeavouring to acquire riches or honours, are in my opinion madmen.

LETTER XXIV.

JULY 24.

SINCE you are ſo much intereſted about my progreſs in drawing, I am ſorry to tell you, that I have hitherto done very little in that way. I never was in a happier diſpoſition; I never underſtood nature better; I never was more ſenſible of the ſublime parts

Digitized by Google

of it, nor entered more minutely into its details; and yet I don't know how to expreſs the ſtate in which I am; my executive powers fail me; every thing ſwims and dances before me, and I cannot make an outline. I think I ſhould ſucceed better in relief, if I was to uſe clay or wax; I ſhall try, if this laſts any longer. Three times I have begun Charlotte's picture, and three times have diſhonoured my pencil. I don't know how it is, not long ago I was very happy in taking likeneſſes; I have made a ſhadow of her, and I muſt content myſelf with that.

LETTER XXV.

JULY 27.

I HAVE very often reſolved not to ſee her ſo often. It is more eaſy to talk than to act. Every day I yield to the temptation; and when I return at night, I ſay I won't go on the morrow; but on the morrow I find myſelf with her again, and don't know how it has happened. Don't imagine, however, that good reaſons are always wanting. One evening ſhe ſaid, "You'll come again to-morrow;" I could not then avoid going. Another day, the weather is ſo fine I muſt walk.—I walk to Walheim; when I am there, it is but

Digitized by Google

half a league farther. My grandmother uſed to tell us a ſtory of a mountain of loadſtone; When any veſſel came near it, the nails flew to the mountain, and the unhappy crew periſhed amidſt the disjointed planks.

LETTER XXVI.

ALBERT is arrived. Were he the beſt and the moſt perfect of men, were I in every reſpect his inferior, it would not be leſs inſupportable to me to ſee him in poſſeſſion of ſo many charms, ſo many perfections. I have ſeen him, my dear friend; I have ſeen this happy huſband; he is a well-bred worthy man, whom one cannot help liking. Happily for me I was not at the firſt meetings; my heart would have been torn to pieces; and he has been ſo kind as not to give Charlotte a ſingle kiſs before me. Heaven reward him for it! The eſteem he has for this charming girl muſt make me love him. He ſhews a regard for me; I am entirely indebted to Charlotte for it. Women always endeavour to keep up a good underſtanding between their friends; it don't often ſucceed; when it does, they only are the gainers by it. Seriouſly I cannot help eſteeming Albert. The coolneſs and calmneſs of his temper form a ſtriking

Digitized by Google

contraſt with the impetuoſity of mine; and yet he has a great deal of feeling, and knows the value of that happineſs which he poſſeſſes. He ſeems very little ſubject to ill-humour; which you know of all faults is the one I am leaſt inclined to excuſe.

He looks upon me as a man of underſtanding and taſte. My attachment to Charlotte, the lively intereſt I ſhew for every thing that relates to her, augment his triumph and his love. I will not enquire whether he may not in private ſometimes teaze her with little jealouſies; in this place, at leaſt, I know I ſhould not be quite eaſy. Be that as it will, the pleaſure I enjoyed with Charlotte is at an end. Shall I call it folly or blindneſs?—But it wants no name, the thing ſpeaks for itſelf. Before Albert came I knew all that I now know; I knew I could have no pretenſions to her, and did not claim any; and now here I am, like an ideot, ſtaring with aſtoniſhment, becauſe another comes and takes her from me. I gnaſh my teeth, I bite my lips, I hate myſelf; but I ſhould deſpiſe the man ſtill more who could tell me coldly, that I muſt reconcile myſelf to it, for it could not be otherwiſe. Let me eſcape from all ſuch ſilly perſonages. —Yeſterday, after having rambled a long time in the woods, I returned to Charlotte's houſe. I found her ſitting with Albert under an arbour. Not knowing what to do, I played the fool, and was guilty of a thouſand extravagancies. "For heaven's ſake," ſaid Charlotte to-day, "let me beg of you that we may have no more ſcenes like this

Digitized by Google

of last night; you are quite alarming in your violent spirits." Between ourselves, I have taken to watch Albert; and when he is engaged I run there, and am always pleased when I find her alone.

LETTER XXVII.

AUGUST 8.

BELIEVE me, my dear friend, when I talked of the people who might advise me to reconcile myself to this event, and said, "Away with such advisers!" I was very far from thinking you could possibly be one of them; but, in fact, you are in the right. I will only make one objection. Of two opposite methods which are proposed, one seldom takes either. There are as many various lines of conduct and opinion, as there are turns of feature between an aquiline nose and a flat one.

Give me leave then to grant all your conclusions, and contrive a middle way for myself, to slip between them.

You say to me that I either have hopes of obtaining Charlotte, or that I have not. In the first case, I ought to follow my point, and press forward to the accomplishment of my wishes;—in the second case, you tell me to

act as a man, and throw aſide the unfortunate affection which will conſume all my ſtrength, this is very juſtly ſaid, my dear friend, and very eaſy too to ſay.

Would you require of a feeble man, oppreſſed by a low and languid diſeaſe, which is wearing out his conſtitution by degrees, that he ſhould put an end to his miſeries by a piſtol or a dagger? Does not the ſame diſeaſe, which is conſuming his life, at the ſame time deprive him of the reſolution to put an end to it?

You might in return ſend me a ſimile of the ſame kind.—Who would not have an arm cut off, rather than riſk his life by deferring the operation? Perhaps many would.—But let us leave theſe compariſons.

There are times in which I have reſolution, and ſhould perhaps go away, if I knew where to go.

LETTER XXVIII.

AUGUST 10.

IF I were not deprived of all underſtanding, I might lead the happieſt life in the world here; ſo many agreeable circumſtances, and of a kind to make a worthy man happy are ſeldom united. Alas! I feel it but too ſen

Digitized by Google

sibly! happiness depends solely on the mind! To be considered as making part of the most amiable family in the world, to be beloved by the father as a son, by the children as a father, and by Charlotte—and this worthy Albert, who does not interrupt my happiness by any stroke of ill-humour, who salutes me cordially, and prefers me to every thing but Charlotte! My dear friend, you would like to hear us, when we talk together and talk of Charlotte. In fact, nothing can be more ridiculous than our connection, and yet I am frequently softened even to tears. When he talks to me of Charlotte's most respectable mother; when he describes to me her last moments, and the affecting scene in which she gave up to her daughter the care of her children and family; when he tells me how Charlotte immediately assumed another character; what a skilful œconomist, and an active housewife she became, and what a tender mother; every day displaying all these qualities, and yet preserving her agreeable chearfulness and vivacity, I walk by the side of him, pick up flowers by the way, with great attention make a nosegay, and—throw it on the first brook I come to, and watch it as it glides gently down. I don't recollect whether I told you that Albert is to settle here. He is much esteemed at court, and has obtained a place which brings him in a good income. I have seen few men so punctual and methodical in business.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XXX.

AUGUST 12.

ALBERT is certainly one of the best men in the world. I had a very singular conversation with him yesterday, which I must relate to you. I went to take leave of him; for I took it into my head to spend a few days up the mountains, from whence I now write to you. As I was walking up and down his room, I observed his pistols. I asked him to lend them to me for my journey. "They are at your service," said he, "if you will take the trouble of loading them, for I only keep them there for form." I took one up, and he continued; "ever since I had like to have suffered by the precaution I have left off keeping loaded fire-arms." I desired him to tell me what the accident was. "I was with a friend in the country," said he; "my pistols were not loaded, and I slept with perfect tranquility; but one rainy afternoon, when I was sitting and doing nothing, it came into my head, I don't know how, that the house might be attacked, and that these pistols might be of use, and that we might—in short, you know how one goes on when one has nothing better to do. I gave my pistols to my servant to clean and load. He was playing with the maid, and trying to frighten her; and, God knows how, the pistol went

off;—the rammer was in; it went against the girl's hand, and tore off her thumb. You may imagine the lamentations and noise we had; and moreover a surgeons bill to pay. Since that accident my pistols have remained as you see them." What, indeed, is the use of precaution, we cannot, my dear friend, foresee the dangers which threaten us. Do you know, I like every thing in this man except his *indeeds*; and every rule has an exception. But he is so correct in his behaviour, of such perfect veracity, that if he thinks he has risked any thing, or been too general, or not strictly true, he never ceases to moderate, and qualify, and extenuate, till at length it appears that he has said nothing at all. Albert now, according to custom, was immersed in his text; I ceased to hear him, and was lost in reveries. In these reveries, I put the mouth of the pistol to my forehead. "What do you mean?" cried Albert, turning back the pistol. "It is not charged," said I. "And if it is not," he answered with impatience, "what do you mean by it? I cannot comprehend how a man should be so mad as to blow out his brains; and the bare idea of it shocks me." "What right has any man," said I, "in speaking of an action, immediately to pronounce that it is mad, or wise, or good, or bad? What is meant by all this? Have you carefully examined the interior motives for the action? Have you fairly unfolded all the reasons which gave rise to it, and which made it necessary? If you did all this you would not be so quick with your decision." "However,"

Digitized by Google

said Albert, "you will allow that some actions are criminal, whatever were the motives for committing them."—I granted it, and shrugged up my shoulders.

"But still, my good friend," I said, "there are more exceptions to make. Theft is a crime; but the man who is driven to it with extreme poverty, with no design but to save himself and his family from perishing for want, must he too be punished? and is he not rather an object of our compassion? Who shall throw the first stone at a husband that, in the first heat of just resentment, sacrifices a faithless wife, and her perfidious seducer? or at a young girl whom love only has led astray? Even our laws, our pedantic laws, our cold cruel laws, relent and withdraw their punishment.

"These examples are very different," said Albert; "because a man, under the influence of violent passion, is incapable of reflection, and is looked upon as drunk or out of his senses." "Oh! you people of sound understanding," I replied, smiling, "are very ready to pronounce sentence, and talk of extravagance, and madness, and intoxication; you are quiet, and care for nothing; you avoid the drunken man, and detest the extravagant; you pass on the other side like the Priest, and like the Pharisee you thank God that you are not one of them. I have more than once experienced the effects of drinking; my passions have always bordered upon extravagance, and I am not ashamed to own it. Do I not find that those superior men, who

have done any great or extraordinary action, have in all times been treated as if they were intoxicated or mad?

"And in private life too, is it not insufferable, that if a young man does any thing uncommonly noble or generous, the world immediately says he is out of his senses? Take shame to yourselves, ye people of discretion; take shame to yourselves ye sages of the earth."—"This now is one of your extravagant flights," said Albert; "you always go beyond the mark; and here you are most undoubtedly wrong, to compare suicide, which is in question, with great actions; for it can only be looked upon as a weakness. It is much easier to die than to bear a life of misery with fortitude."

I was upon the point of breaking off the conversation immediately; for nothing puts me out of all patience, like a common-place opinion, which means nothing, whilst I am talking from my inmost heart. However I got the better of myself; for having often heard this pitiful argument, I now begin to be used to it. But I answered with some warmth, "You call this a weakness, beware of being carried away by such sounds? Suppose a people groaning under the yoke of tyranny; do you call them weak, when at length they throw it off and break their chains? The man who, to rescue his house from flames, exerts all his powers, lifts burthens with ease that he could scarcely move when his mind was at peace; he who attacks and puts to flight half a score of his enemies;

Digitized by Google

are these weak people? My good friend, if resistance is a mark of strength, can the highest degree of resistance be called a weakness?" Albert looked stedfastly at me, and said, "Begging your pardon, I don't think the examples you have brought have any relation to the subject in question." "That may very likely be," I answered, "for I have been often told, that my way of combining things appeared extravagant. But let us try to set the matter in another light; let us examine what is the situation of a man who resolves to free himself from the burthen of life—a burthen that is in general so much desired—and let us enter into his feelings; for we cannot otherwise reason fairly on the subject.

"Human nature," I continued, "has certain limits; there is a degree of joy, grief, pain, and which it is able to endure, and beyond that degree it is annihilated.

We are not, therefore, to enquire whether a man is weak or strong, but whether he can pass the bounds of nature, and the measure of his sufferings, either of mind or body; and I think it is as absurd to say that a man who destroys himself is a coward, as to call a man a coward who dies of a malignant fever." "Paradox, all paradox!" exclaimed Albert. "Not so Paradoxical as you imagine," I replied; "you will allow that we call disease mortal, in which nature is so severely attacked, and her strength so far exhausted, that what remains is not sufficient to raise her up and set her going again.

Digitized by Google

"Let us apply this to the mind; let us see how ideas work, and how impressions fix upon it; at length a violent passion, takes entire possession, destroys all the powers it possessed when at ease, and entirely subdues it.

"It is in vain that a man of sound understanding and cool temper sees the miserable situation of a wretch in such circumstances; it is in vain that he counsels him; 'tis like the man in health, who sits by the bed of his dying friend, but is unable to communicate to him the smallest portion, of his strength."

Albert thought this too general. I quoted the girl who lately drowned herself, and made him recollect the story—"A good young creature, so accustomed to the narrow sphere of domestic labour, and the business of the week, that she knew of no pleasure but taking a walk in the fields on a Sunday, dancing once perhaps in the holidays, and the rest of her time only talking with her next neighbour of the news and little quarrels of the village. At length her heart feels new and unknown wishes; all that used to please her, now by degrees becomes tasteless till she meets with a man to whom a new affection invisibly attaches her; from that time her hopes are all centered in him; the whole surrounding world is forgotten by her; she sees, hears, and desires nothing but him; he alone occupies all her thoughts. Her heart having never felt the baneful pleasure arising from light vanity, her wishes tend immediately to the object of them; she hopes to belong to him, and in eternal bonds expect to enjoy all the desires of

Digitized by Google

her heart, and to realize the ideas of happineſs which ſhe has formed. His repeated promiſes confirm her hopes; his fondneſs encreaſes her paſſion; her whole ſoul is loſt and drowned in pleaſure; her heart is all rapture. At length ſhe ſtretches out her arms to embrace the object of her vows—All is vaniſhed away; her lover forſakes her—Amazed! petrified; ſhe ſtands ſenſeleſs before the abyſs of miſery ſhe ſees before her; all around her is darkneſs; for her there is no proſpect, nor hope, nor conſolation;—ſhe is forſaken by him in whom her life was bound up; and in the wide univerſe which is before her, and amongſt ſo many who might repair her loſs, ſhe feels alone and abandoned by the whole world. Thus blinded, thus impelled, by the piercing grief which wrings her heart, ſhe plunges into the deep to put an end to her torments. Such, Albert, is the hiſtory of many men; and is it not a parrallel caſe with illneſs? Nature has no way to eſcape; her powers exhauſted, and contending powers to ſtruggle with, death muſt be the conſequence. Woe unto the man who could hear this ſituation deſcribed, and who could ſay, "A fooliſh girl! why did not ſhe wait till time had worn off the impreſſion? her deſpair would have been ſoftened, and ſhe would have found another lover to comfort her." One might as well ſay, "A fool! he died of a fever; why did he not wait till he had recovered his ſtrength, till his blood was calm? then all would have been well, and he would have been alive now."

Albert, who did not allow the compariſon

Digitized by Google

to be juſt, made many objections; amongſt the reſt. That I had only brought the example of a ſimple and ignorant girl;—but he could not comprehend how a man of ſenſe, whoſe views are more enlarged, and who ſees ſuch various conſolations ſhould ever ſuffer himſelf to fall into ſuch a ſtate of deſpair. "My good friend," ſaid I, "whatever is the education of a man, whatever is his underſtanding, ſtill he is a man, and the little reaſon that he poſſeſſes, either does not act at all, or acts very feebly when the paſſions are let looſe, or rather when the boundaries of human nature cloſe in upon him—But we will talk of this another time," I ſaid, and took up my hat—Alas! my heart was full—and we parted without conviction on either ſide—How rarely do men underſtand one another.

LETTER XXX.

AUGUST 15.

IT is moſt certain that what renders one man neceſſary to another, is a ſimilarity of taſte and ſentiment. I ſee that Charlotte would not loſe me without regret; and as to the children, they every day aſk me to come again to-morrow. I went this afternoon to

Digitized by Google

tune Charlotte's harpſicord; but I could not contrive to do it; all the children came about me, and aſked me to tell them a ſtory. Charlotte was deſirous that I ſhould pleaſe them, and I told my very beſt tale of the prince that was ſerved with dwarfs. I improve by this exerciſe myſelf, I aſſure you, and am quite ſurprized at the impreſſion theſe ſtories make upon the children. If I invent an incident at any time, and afterwards omit it, the little arch rogues never fail to tell me, it was not ſo the firſt time; ſo that I now endeavour to relate with great exactneſs, and without any pauſes, and in a tone of voice that is almoſt recitative. I ſee by this how much an author hurts his works by altering them even for the better. The firſt impreſſion is readily received. A man will believe the incredible, it will be engraved on his memory; and woe unto thoſe who would afterwards endeavour to efface it!

LETTER XXXI.

WHAT conſtitutes the happineſs of man, muſt it then change and become the ſource of his miſery? That ardent ſentiment which animated my heart with the love of

Digitized by Google

of nature, which poured in upon me a torrent of delight, which brought all paradiſe before me, is now become an inſupportable torment, a demon which purſues and harraſes me, inceſſantly. In times paſt I contemplated from the top of high rocks, the broad river which, far as eye can reach, waters this fertile plain. Every thing put forth and grew, and was expanded. Around me all was in motion. I ſaw theſe mountains covered to their ſummits with high tufted trees, and the vallies in their various windings ſheltered by ſmiling woods; the peaceful ſtream gently glided through the trembling reeds, and in its calm ſurface reflected the light clouds, which a ſoft zephy kept ſuſpended in the air. I heard the birds animating the woods with their ſong. Millions of inſects danced in the purple rays of the ſun. The arid rock afforded nouriſhment to the moſs: and the ſands below were covered with broom. The viviſying heat which animates all nature, was every where diſplayed before my eyes; it filled and warmed my heart. I was loſt in the idea of infinity. Stupenduous mountains encompaſſed me; precipices were before my feet; torrents fell by the ſide of me; impetuous rivers ran through the plain; rocks and mountains reſounded from afar; and in the depths of the earth I ſaw innumerable powers in motion and multiplying to infinity. All the beings of the creation, of a thouſand tribes and a thouſand forms, move upon the earth and in the air; and man hides himſelf in his little hut, and ſays, "I am lord over this vaſt uni

Digitized by Google

verse." Weak mortal! all things appear little to you, for you are little yourself. Craggy mountains, deserts untrodden by the foot of man, even the unknown confines of the immense ocean, are animated by the breath of the Eternal, and every atom to which he has given existence and life, finds favour in his sight. Ah! how often at that time has the flight of a sea-bird which passed over my head, inspired me with the desire of being transported to the shore of the immeasurable waters, there to drink the pleasures of life as in a river, and to partake, if but for a moment, and with the confined powers of my soul, of the beatitude of the Creator, in whom we live and move and have our being.

My dear friend, the bare recollection of these times still gives me pleasure; the vehemence of mind with which I recall the sensations, which gives me faculties to express them, raises me above myself, and makes me doubly feel my present anguish.

The curtain drops, the scene is changed; instead of prospects of eternal life, a bottomless pit is for ever opened before me. Can we say of any thing, that it exists, when all passes away, when time in its rapid progress carries every thing with it, and our transitory existence, hurried along by the torrent, is either swallowed up by the waves or dashed against the rocks? There is not a moment which does not prey upon me, and all around me; and every moment I am myself a destroyer. The most innocent walk deprives of life a thousand of poor insects; one step destroys the fa-

Digitized by Google

bric of the industrious ant, and turns a little world into a chaos! No, 'tis not the great and uncommon calamities of the world, the floods which sweep away whole villages, the earthquakes, that swallow up our towns, which touch and affect me. What saps my heart, is that destroying hidden power, which exists in every thing. Nature has formed nothing which does not consume itself, and every thing that is near it: so that surrounded by earth and air, and by all the active powers, I wander with an aching heart, and the universe to me is a fearful monster, which devours and regorges its food.

LETTER XXXII.

AUGUST 20.

IT is in vain that I stretch out my arms towards her, when I wake in the morning after the ill-omened visions of the night; 'tis in vain that I seek her, when an innocent dream has happily deceived me, and placed me by her side in the fields; I held her hand, I covered it with kisses; Alas! when half asleep, I still think I touch her, and then I wake entirely—torrents of tears flow from my oppressed heart! and bereaved of all comfort I weep over the woes to come.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XXXIII.

AUGUST 22.

MY active spirits have degenerated into uneasy indolence:———I cannot employ myself; I cannot be idle; I cannot think; I am no longer sensible of the beauties of nature, and books are distasteful to me.—When we give ourselves up, every thing fails us.—I wish sometimes I was a mechanic; when I waked in the morning I should have some pursuit, some hope, a task at least for the day. I often envy Albert when I see him buried in a heap of papers and parchments up to his eyes; and I say it to myself; in his place I should be happy.—I have more than once intended to write to you, and to the minister, for the employment which you think I might obtain. I believe myself I might have it; the minister has long shewn a regard for me, and has often told me that I ought to seek some employment. It is the business of an hour only; but when the fable recurs to me of the horse, who being weary of his liberty, suffered himself to be saddled and bridled, and then found reason to repent; I say, when this fable recurs to me, I don't know what to determine upon.—Besides, my dear friend, this desire to change my situation, is it not the consequence of that restless perturbed spirit which would equally pursue me in very situation in life?

Digitized by Google

LETTER XXXIV.

AUGUST 28.

IF my ills could admit any cure, they would certainly be cured here. This is my birth-day —Very early in the morning I received a little parcel from Albert ;—Upon opening it, I found one of the knots which Charlotte had on her ſleeve the firſt time I ſaw her, and which I ſeveral times aſked her to give me. Albert had added two volumes in 12mo. of Wetſtein's Homer, which I had wanted for ſome time, the Erneſti edition being inconvenient to carry with me when I walked out. You ſee how they prevent my wiſhes, how well they underſtand all thoſe little attentions of friendſhip, ſo ſuperior to the magnificent preſents of the great, which are humiliating. I kiſſed the ſleeve-knot a thouſand times, and every time I breathed delight from the memory of happy days—days which will never return. Such my friend is our fate—I do not murmur at it—The flowers of life do but juſt ſhew themſelves. How many paſs away, and leave no trace behind! How few are ſucceeded by fruit, and the fruit how rarely does it ripen!—Alas! is it not ſtrange, my dear friend, that we ſhould ſuffer to periſh and to decay, the little which remains and ripens? Adieu!

Digitized by Google

It is the fineſt weather in the world.—In Charlotte's orchard I often climb into a tree and chooſe pears for her; ſhe ſtands under it and takes them from me as I gather them.

LETTER XXXV.

AUGUST 30.

WRETCH that I am, do I not take pleaſure in deceiving myſelf, and am I not without underſtanding?—What will become of this ardent and unbounded paſſion?—I addreſs no prayers but to Charlotte; my imagination ſees nothing but her; all that ſurrounds me is of no account, but as it relates to her.—And in this ſtate I enjoy ſome happy hours; till I am obliged to tear myſelf from her; and to that alas! my heart often forces me. When I have been ſitting by her for two or three hours, quite abſorbed by her figure, her attitudes, her divine expreſſions, the ſentiment by degrees takes poſſeſſion of me, and is worked up to the higheſt exceſs; my ſight is confuſed; my breathing is oppreſſed; I hear nothing; my veins ſwell; a palpatation ſeizes my heart, and I ſcarcely know where I am, or whether I exiſt. Then if ſoft ſenſations, do not prevail, as it ſometimes happens,—if Charlotte does not a-

leaſt allow me the melancholy conſolation to bathe her hand with my tears, I am obliged to leave her, and run and wander about the country. I climb ſteep rocks; I break my way through copſes, amongſt thorns and briers which tear me to pieces, and I feel a little relief. Sometimes I lie ſtretched on the ground, overcome with fatigue, and dying with thirſt: ſometimes late in the night, when the moon ſhines upon my head, I lean againſt a bending tree in ſome ſequeſtered foreſt, to eaſe my wrung feet; and quite worn out and exhauſted, I ſleep till break of day. Oh! my friend! the diſmal cell, the ſack-cloth, the girdle with ſharp points of iron, would be indulgence and luxury in compariſon to what I now ſuffer.—Adieu.—I ſee no end to theſe torments but the grave.

LETTER XXXVI.

SEPTEMBER 3.

I WILL go.—my dear friend I thank you; I was in doubt and you determine me. I have reſolved to leave her this fortnight; it muſt be ſo.—She is returned to the town, and is at the houſe of a friend; and Albert—and —I will go from hence.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XXXVII.

SEPTEMBER 3.

WHAT a night! I can henceforth bear any thing. My friend, I shall see her no more. Ah! why cannot I fall on your neck, and with floods of tears express all the passions which tear my heart! I am sitting down, and trying to breathe freely, and doing all that is in my power to compose my mind: I am waiting for day-light and the post horses. Charlotte is at rest; she does not know that she will see me no more. I tore myself away; and had the resolution not to betray my intention, during a conversation which lasted two hours.—Great God! such a conversation!

Albert promised me to come with Charlotte into the garden immediately after supper. I was upon the the terrace, under the thick chesnut trees, and saw the setting sun; my eyes for the last time saw him sink beneath this delightful valley and silent stream. I had often been upon the same spot with Charlotte, and seen the same glorious sight, and now—I walked up and down this walk so dear to me; a secret sympathy had often detained me there before I knew Charlotte; and we were pleased when, early in our acquaintance, we found we had both the same predilection for this place. Under the ches-

nut trees there is an extenſive view—But I remember that I mentioned this to you before in a letter, and deſcribed how high copſes incloſe the end of it; how the walk through the wood becomes darker and darker, till it ends in a receſs, formed by the thickeſt trees, and which has all the charms of gloomy ſolitude. I ſtill remember the tender melancholy which came over my heart the firſt time I entered this ſilent deep retreat. I had certainly a ſecret foreboding, that it would one day be the ſcene of my torment.

After I had ſpent half an hour in the oppoſite ideas of going away and returning again, I heard them come up the terrace. I flew to meet them, and ſhuddering I took Charlotte's hand and kiſſed it. Juſtas we reached the top of the terrace, the moon appeared behind a hill covered with wood, converſing on various ſubjects we came to the dark receſs; Charlotte went in and ſat down, Albert ſat down by her ſide; I did the ſame.—But my agitation did not ſuffer me to remain long ſeated;—I got up and ſtood before her, walked backwards and forwards, ſat down again;—it was a ſtate of violent emotion.

Charlotte made us obſerve a fine effect of moon-light at the end of the wood, which appeared the more ſtriking and brilliant from the darkneſs which ſurrounded the ſpot where we were. We remained for ſome time ſilent; and then Charlotte ſaid, "Whenever I walk by moon-light, it brings to my remembrance all thoſe who were dear to me, who are no more; and I think of death and a future

Digitized by Google

ſtate. Yes, continues ſhe, with a firm but touching voice, "we ſhall ſtill exiſt; but, Werter, ſhall we find one another out? ſhall we know one another again? What preſages have you? What is your opinion?"

"Charlotte," I ſaid, holding out my hand to her, and my eyes full of tears, "we ſhall again ſee one another here and hereafter." I could ſay no more.—My dear friend, ſhould ſhe have put this queſtion to me, juſt when the thoughts of a cruel ſeparation filled my heart?

"And thoſe perſons who have been dear to us," ſaid ſhe, "and who are now no more, do they know that when we are happy, we recall them to our memory with tenderneſs? —The ſhade of my mother hovers round me, when in a ſtill evening I ſit in the midſt of her children—when I ſee them aſſembled about me, as they uſed to be aſſembled about her! I then raiſe my ſwimming eyes to Heaven, and wiſh ſhe could look down upon us, and ſee that I fulfil the promiſe which I made to her in her laſt moments, to be a mother to her children! A hundred times have I exclaimed, pardon, deareſt of mothers! pardon me, if I am not to them all that you were! —Alas! I do all that I can; they are all properly cloathed and fed, and ſtill more, they are well educated and beloved! If you can behold our mutual attachment, the harmony that ſubſiſts amongſt us, you would give thanks to that Being to whom, dying, you addreſſed ſuch fervent prayers for our happineſs." This, ſhe ſaid, my dear friend; but

who could repeat all her words? how should cold and unfeeling characters catch the expreſſions of ſentiment and genius; Albert gently interrupted her,—"My charming Charlotte, you are too much affected; I know theſe recollections are dear to you, but I beg—" Oh! Albert," ſaid ſhe, "you do not forget, I know you do not, the evenings when we three, during the abſence of my father, uſed to ſit at our little round table after the children were gone to bed. You often had a book in your hand, but you ſeldom read any of it—and who would not have preferred the converſation of that delightful woman to every thing in the world? She was beautiful, mild, chearful, and always active. God knows how often I have knelt before him, and prayed that I might be like her.

I threw myſelf at her feet; I took her hands, and wetting them with my tears, ſaid, "Charlotte; the benediction of Heaven is upon you, and the ſpirit of your mother."—"If you had but known her," ſhe ſaid, and preſſed my hand—"ſhe was worthy of being known to you."—I was motionleſs; never had I received praiſe ſo flattering. "And this woman was to die in the flower of her age; the youngeſt of her children was but ſix months old. Her illneſs was ſhort; ſhe was reſigned and calm; nothing gave her any anxiety but her children, and more particularly the youngeſt. When ſhe found her end approaching ſhe bade me go and fetch them; and when they were all round her bed, the

Digitized by Google

little ones who did not know their misfortune, and the great ones who were quite overcome with sorrow, she raised her feeble hands to heaven, hung over them, and prayed for them, then kissed them one after the other, sent them back, and said to me, "Be you their mother," I held out my hand to her. "You promise much my child; a mother's fondness and a mother's care. Your tears of affection and gratitude have often shewn me that you felt what was a mother's tenderness—shew such tenderness to your brothers and sisters: and to your father be dutiful and faithful as a wife; you will be his comfort." She asked for him. He was gone out to hide the bitterness of his grief;—he felt all that he was to lose, and his heart was in agonies.

"You, Albert, were in the room. She heard somebody move; asked who it was, and desired you to come to her. She looked at us both with great composure and satisfaction in her countenance, and said, "They will be happy, they will be happy with one another!" Albert taking her in his arms, cried out, "Yes, Charlotte, we are and shall be happy." Even the calm Albert was moved;—I was quite out of my senses.

"And such a woman," she continued, "was to leave us, Werter—Great God! must we thus part with every thing we hold dear in the world? Nobody feels this more keenly than children; they cried and lamented for a long time afterwards, that the black man had carried away their dear mama!"

Digitized by Google

Charlotte got up;—it rouzed me—but I remained ſitting and held her hand. "Let us go," ſaid ſhe; "it is quite time." She drew away her hand; I graſped it ſtill cloſer. "we ſhall ſee one another again," I ſaid; "we ſhall find one another out; under whatever form it is, we ſhall know one another. I am going; yes, I am going of my own accord; but if it was for ever; it would be more than I could bear. Adieu, Charlotte, adieu Albert! we ſhall ſee one another again." ——"Yes, to-morrow, I fancy," ſhe added, ſmiling. I felt the word *to-morrow*. Alas! ſhe ſcarcely knew when ſhe withdrew her hand from me. She withdrew her hand from me—.She went down the walk. I ſtood and followed her with my eyes, then threw myſelf on the ground in a paſſion of tears; I got up again, and ran up the terrace, and there I ſtill ſaw under the ſhade of the lime-trees, her white gown waving near the garden gate. I ſtretched out my arms and ſhe diſappeared.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

SORROWS

OF

WERTER;

A

GERMAN STORY.

———*Tædet cœli convexa tueri.*

——TO EACH HIS SUFFERINGS.

GRAY. *(Ode to Adversity.)*

VOL. II.

LONDON:

T. CADELL.

M.DCC.LXXXVII.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE SORROWS OF WERTER.

LETTER XXXVIII.

20th October, 1771.

I ARRIVED here yesterday. The minister is indisposed, and will not go out for some days. If he was less peevish and morose all would do well. I see it but too plainly, heaven has destined me to severe trials; but I won't be disheartened; one may bear any thing with a little levity. I can scarcely help smiling at the word which has just escaped me; a little of that levity, which I am totally without, would make me the happiest of men. And must I

Digitized by Google

deſpair of my faculties and the gifts of nature, whilſt others of far inferior ſtrength and talents are parading before me with the utmoſt ſatisfaction in themſelves? Great God, amidſt the bleſſings thou deigned to ſhower down upon me, why was I not endowed with ſelf-complacency and confidence? But patience, and all will I hope be better; for I will own to you, my dear friend, that you were in the right: ſince I have been obliged continually to mix with other men—ſince I have had an opportunity of obſerving their deſigns, their conduct, their converſation, I am become more eaſy and more ſatisfied with myſelf. As we naturally compare ourſelves with every thing we meet, our happineſs or miſery depends on the objects which are brought into compariſon with us, and in this reſpect nothing is more dangerous than ſolitude. There our imagination, which is ever diſpoſed to riſe, takes a new flight on the wings of fancy, and forms a chain of beings of which we are the laſt and moſt inferior. All things appear greater than they really are, and all ſeem ſuperior to us; and this operation of the mind is natural. We are continually feeling our own imperfections; we think we have obſerved in others qualities which we have not, and conclude they alſo poſſeſs all we have ourſelves: and thus we have made a perfect, a happy man;——but ſuch a man exiſts only in our imaginations.

But when, in ſpite of weakneſs and diſappointment, we direct our endeavours to one

Digitized by Google

end, and ſteadily perſevere in the purſuit of it, we often find that we have made more way though continually tacking, than others with all the aſſiſtance of wind and tide; and yet that is a true judgment which we form of ourſelves from our ſituation with others, whether we are on a line with them, or before them.

LETTER XXXIX.

10th November.

I BEGIN to think my ſituation more tolerable: I am much occupied; and the number of actors, and the different parts they play, make a very amuſing variety in the ſcene. I have made an acquaintance with the Count of C———, and I eſteem him more and more every day. He is a man of ſtrong underſtanding and great diſcernment: but though he ſees farther than other people, he is not therefore cold in his temper and manner; his ſenſibility ſurpaſſes all his other qualities. One morning that I went to ſpeak to him upon buſineſs, he expreſſed a friendſhip for me; by the firſt word he perceived that we underſtood each other, and that he might

Digitized by Google

talk to me in a ſtyle different from that he made uſe of with moſt of the others.

I cannot expreſs the ſatisfaction I receive from the openneſs of his conduct with regard to me. It is the greateſt of pleaſures when a delicate mind thus lays itſelf open to one.

LETTER XL.

December 24.

I FORESAW it:—The miniſter occaſions me a number of vexations. 'Tis the moſt punctilious blockhead under heaven;—he goes on ſtep by ſtep with the trifling minuteneſs of an old woman. But how can a man be pleaſed with other people, who is never ſatisfied with himſelf? I like to go on with buſineſs regularly, and with alacrity; and when it is finiſhed, that it ſhould be finiſhed. But not ſo with him; he is capable of returning my draught to me and ſaying, "It will do, but go over it again, however, there is always ſomething to correct; one may find a better phraſe or a properer word." I then loſe all patience, and wiſh myſelf at the devil. Not a conjunction, not one connecting word muſt be omitted; and as to the tranſpoſitions, which I like, and which flow naturally from

Digitized by Google

my pen, he is their mortal foe. If every ſentence is not expreſſed exactly in the ſtyle of the office, he is quite loſt. 'Tis deplorable to have any connection with ſuch a perſonage.

The only thing which gives me ſatisfaction, is my intimacy with Count C———. He very frankly told me the other day, how much he was diſpleaſed with the difficulties and delays of the miniſter; that people of his caſt muſt make every thing troubleſome to themſelves, and to others.——"But", added he, "one muſt ſubmit, as a traveller that is obliged to climb over a mountain;—if the mountain was not in the way, his road would undoubtedly be ſhorter and more convenient; but in fine, there it is, and he muſt go over it."

The old man perceives the Count's preference for me——it makes him angry. When I am preſent, he takes every opportunity to depreciate the Count: I naturally take up his defence, and that increaſes his diſpleaſure. Yeſterday I was well aware that when he aimed a ſtroke at my friend, he meant that it ſhould alſo hit me.——"For the common affairs of the world", ſaid he, "the Count may do very well; his ſtyle is good, and he writes with facility; but like other great geniuſes, he has no ſolid learning." I longed to ſtrike him ——for to what purpoſe is argument with ſuch a kind of animal? However, as that was not poſſible, I anſwered with ſome warmth, that every reſpect was due to him, both for his underſtanding and his character; that he was the only man I had ever met with, whoſe ex-

Digitized by Google

tenſive genius raiſed him ſo high above the common level, and who yet retained all his activity in buſineſs. This was algebra to his conceptions; and I withdrew, leſt ſome new abſurdity in him ſhould raiſe my choler too much. It is you that are the authors of my ill-fortune; you, all of you who forced me to bend my neck to this yoke, and preached activity to me. If the man who plants potatoes, and carries them to town on market-days, is not a more active being than I am, then let me work ten years longer at the curſed galley to which I am now chained.

And diſtaſte and laſſitude, thoſe faſhionable miſeries which reign amongſt the ſilly people who affect an unmixed ſociety; the ambition of rank! how they toil, how they watch to gain precedence! What poor and contemptible paſſions, and how plain to be ſeen! We have a woman here, for example, who never ceaſes to entertain the company with accounts of her family, and her eſtates. Any ſtranger who heard her would ſuppoſe ſhe was a ſilly creature, whoſe head was turned by ſome ſlight pretence at leaſt to rank, or the lordſhip of a manor; but ſtill more ridiculous, ſhe is the daughter of a ſteward's clerk in this neighbourhood. I cannot conceive how the human race can ſo debaſe itſelf.

I do indeed every day perceive more and more how abſurd it is to judge of others by one's ſelf. And it is with ſo much difficulty that I ſtop the ferment of my blood, and keep my heart at peace, that I very readily leave

Digitized by Google

every one to purſue the path he has choſen; but at the ſame time I aſk a like permiſſion for myſelf.

Theſe paltry diſtinctions between the inhabitants of the ſame town, are what diſturb me moſt. I know perfectly well, that inequality of conditions is neceſſary, and much I myſelf gain by it. But I would not have this inſtitution come in my way and hinder me, when I might enjoy ſome pleaſure, ſome ſhadow of happineſs upon this earth.

I have lately made an acquaintance with a Miſs B——, a very agreeable girl; who notwithſtanding the formality and ſtiffneſs of the people about her, has retained a very eaſy and unaffected manner. The firſt converſation we had together, equally pleaſed us both: and when we parted I deſired leave to pay my reſpects to her, which ſhe granted in ſo obliging a manner, that I waited with impatience for the time to avail myſelf of it. She is not of this place, but lives here with an aunt. The countenance of the old virago diſpleaſed me at firſt ſight; however, I paid her great attention, and often addreſſed myſelf to her. In about half an hour, I pretty nearly gueſſed what her niece has ſince acknowledged. This good aunt, who is in years, with a ſmall fortune, and ſtill ſmaller ſhare of underſtanding, has no ſatisfaction but the long liſt of her anceſtors; no protection but her noble birth; this is the defence, the rampart with which ſhe ſurrounds herſelf; and her only amuſement is ſtanding at her window to look down

Digitized by Google

with ſovereign contempt on the ignoble heads which paſs under it in the ſtreet. This ridiculous old woman was formerly handſome, and many a young man was the ſport of her caprice: that was the golden age. Her charms faded, ſhe was forced to accept of an old half-pay officer, and be ſubſervient to his will:—— that was the age of braſs. Now ſhe is a widow, and deſerted; was it not for her agreeable niece nobody would take notice of her; this may truly be called the iron age.

LETTER XLI.

January 8, 1772.

WHAT men are theſe!—Form occupies their whole ſouls; they can employ their time and thoughts for a whole year together, in contriving how to get nearer, by one chair only, to the upper end of the table.——And don't call it idleneſs, for on the contrary they increaſe their labour, by giving to theſe trifles the time they ought to employ in buſineſs. Laſt week, in a party upon the ice in ſledges, there was a diſpute for precedence, and the party was immediately broken up.

The idiots! They do not ſee that it is not the place which conſtitutes real greatneſs:

Digitized by Google

the man who enjoys the higheſt poſt very rarely acts the principal part: many a king is governed by his miniſter, and many a miniſter by his ſecretary. Who is in that caſe to be accounted the firſt, and chief? Is it not the man who has the power or the addreſs to make the paſſions of others ſubſervient to his own deſigns?

LETTER XLII.

January 20.

I MUST write to you from hence, my dear Charlotte; from a cottage where I have been obliged to take ſhelter from a violent ſtorm. In all the time that I have ſpent in that melancholy town amidſt ſtrangers----- ſtrangers indeed to this heart---I have not been compelled to write to you: but in the cottage, in this retirement, in this ſort of impriſonment, whilſt the ſnow and hail are driving againſt my little window, I find myſelf reſtored to you and to myſelf. The moment I entered, your figure preſented itſelf before my eyes, and the remembrance of you filled my heart. Oh! my Charlotte, the ſacred remembrance! the tender recollections!---Gracious

Digitized by Google

Heaven! reſtore to me the firſt moment in which I beheld her!

Could you but ſee me, my dear Charlotte, in that vortex where every thing diſſipates and nothing touches me! My ſenſes are dried up; my heart is at no time full; I never ſhed the ſoft tears of tenderneſs; nothing, nothing, touches me. I ſtand, as it were, before the rareeſhow; I ſee the little puppets move, and ſay to myſelf it is a deception of optics. I am amuſed with theſe puppets, or rather I am myſelf one of them. I take the hand of the man who ſtands next to me, I feel that it is made of wood, I ſhudder and draw mine back. I have found but one being here that is of the ſame order with you, a Miſs B——. She reſembles you, my dear Charlotte, if indeed it is poſſible for any thing to reſemble you. "Ah!" you will ſay, "he has learned to make fine compliments." And there is ſome truth in your obſervation. I have been prodigiouſly agreeable lately, not having it in my power to be any thing better. I have a great deal of wit too, and the women ſay that nobody underſtands better how to deal out panegyric——"and *lies*," you will add, for one always accompanies the other.—But I meant to talk to you of Miſs B—. She has great ſenſibility, and a ſuperior underſtanding; her fine blue eyes ſhew evident marks of both. Her rank is a burthen to her, and gratifies no one paſſion of her ſoul; ſhe would gladly leave this croud; and we often indulge our imagination in talking for hours together, of

Digitized by Google

happineſs in retired and country ſcenes, and near you, my dear Charlotte;---for ſhe knows you, ſhe does homage to you; but the homage is not exacted; ſhe loves you, and takes great pleaſure in hearing me talk of you.

Oh! Why am I not at your feet in your favourite little room, and the dear children playing round us! If their noiſe became troubleſome to you, I would tell them a ſtory, and they would croud about me with ſilent attention. The ſun is ſetting; his laſt rays ſhine on the ſnow which covers the face of the country; the ſtorm is over and I muſt return to my dungeon. Adieu!—Is Albert with you, and what is he to you? Fool that I am, ſhould I aſk this queſtion?

LETTER XLIII.

February 17.

OUR miniſter and I do not ſeem as if we ſhould continue much longer together:—his manner of treating a ſubject, and of doing buſineſs, is ſo abſurd, that I cannot help contradicting him very often, and doing things my own way; and then, of courſe, he thinks them very ill done. He mentioned ſomething of this kind lately in a letter to court, and I

Digitized by Google

had a reprimand from the minister there:——very gentle indeed—but still it was a reprimand; and I had resolved to resign, when I had received a private letter, before which I humbled myself, and adored the wise, the noble, the exalted genius which dictated it——which endeavoured to sooth my painful sensibility——expressed an approbation of my schemes, and an opinion of their weight and influence; condescending to enquire into business, as well as to examine the ideas of an impetuous young man. How am I exhorted not to extinguish this fire, but to soften it, and keep it within due bounds, that it may be productive of good! So now I am no longer at variance with myself, but settled, determined——at least for a week to come. Content and peace of mind are valuable things, my dear friend; but if they are precious, they are also transitory.

LETTER XLIV.

February 20.

GOD bless you, my dear friends! And may he grant to you that happiness which he denies to me! I thank you Albert for having deceived me. I waited for the wedding-day

Digitized by Google

to be fixed, and on that day I intended with ſolemnity to have taken down Charlotte's profile from the wall, and with ſome other papers to have buried it. You are now united, and her picture ſtill remains there. Well, let it remain! Why ſhould it not? Does not Charlotte find room for me in her heart?—Yes, you may allow me to occupy the ſecond place there, and I will, I ought to keep it; I ſhould become furious if ſhe could forget—Albert, that thought is hell.——May you be be happy, Albert!—Charlotte, angel of light, may you be the happieſt of women!

LETTER XLV.

March 15.

I HAVE juſt had an adventure which will drive me from hence:——I loſe all patience—Death!—It is not to be remedied, and you only are the cauſe of all this;—you that drove me on, and urged and tormented me; you that made me take an employment I am by no means fit for. I have great reaſon now to be ſatisfied, ſo have you. But that I may not again be told, that the impetuoſity of my temper ruins every thing, I here ſend you, Sir, a plain and ſimple narration of the affair,

Digitized by Google

as any mere chronicler of facts would relate it:

The Count of O---- likes me, diſtinguiſhes me; it is known that he does; I have mentioned it to you a hundred times. Yeſterday I dined with him; it was the day on which all the nobility meet at his houſe. I never once dreamed of the aſſembly, nor that we ſubalterns were excluded. In ſhort I dined with the Count, and after dinner we went into the hall, and talked and walked backwards and forwards. Colonel B---, who came in, joined in the converſation, and the time paſſed away until the company came. God knows I was thinking of nothing, when entered the right noble and right honourable Lady of T--, accompanied by her huſband and their ſilly daughter, with her ſmall waiſt and flat neck; with diſdainful looks and a haughty air they paſſed by me. As I hate the whole race, I intended to go away, and was only waiting, till the Count had diſengaged himſelf from their impertinent prate, to take leave, when the agreeable Miſs B. came in. As I never ſee her but with pleaſure, I ſtaid and talked to her, leaning over the back of her chair, and did not perceive till after ſome time that ſhe ſeemed a little confuſed, and did not ſpeak to me with her uſual eaſe of manner. I was ſtruck with it. "Heavens," ſaid I to myſelf, can ſhe too be like all the reſt?" I was angry and going to withdraw; but the deſire of examining farther into this matter kept me. The reſt of the company came, I

Digitized by Google

saw the baron B--- enter with the same coat that he wore at the coronation of Francis the First; the Chancellor and his wife, who is old and deaf; the Count of I---, whose Gothic dress made a still greater contrast to our modern coats, &c. &c. I spoke to those that I knew amongst them; they were all very laconic in their answers. I was taken up with observing Miss B. and did not see that the women were whispering at the end of the room, and that by degrees the same whispering and murmuring got round amongst the men, and that Madame S. was speaking with great warmth to the Count (this I have since learned from Miss B.)-----At length the Count came up to me, and took me to the window.----"You know our ridiculous customs," he said; "I perceive the company is rather displeased at your being here; I would not upon any account"---"I beg your excellency's pardon; I ought to have thought of it before: but I know you will excuse this little inattention. I was going," I added some time ago, but my evil genius kept me here;" and smiling, I bowed to take my leave. He shook me by the hand in a manner which expressed every thing. I made a bow to the whole illustrious assembly, got into my chaise. and drove to M---l; contemplated the setting sun from the top of the hill. I read that beautiful passage in Homer, where the honest herdsmen are described receiving the king of Ithaca with so much hospitality; and I returned well pleased. When I went into the sup-

Digitized by Google

per-room at night, there were but a few persons assembled, and they had turned up a corner of the table-cloth, and were playing at dice. The good-natured Adelin came up to me as soon as I entered, in a low voice said, "You have met with a very disagreeable incident,"----Who I,"-----"The Count obliged you to withdraw from the assembly." "Devil take the assembly!" said I, "I was very glad to be gone." "I am rejoiced," he said, "that you look upon the affair in that light; all that concerns me is, to find that it is talked of every where already." From that moment I began to think of it in a different manner. All those that looked at me whilst we were at table, I imagined were looking at me on account of this incident, and bitterness entered my heart. And now that I am pitied wherever I go, and hear the triumph of my enemies, who say, "This is always the case with those vain insignificant personages who pretend to despise forms, and want to raise themselves;" with other nonsense of the same kind------I could plunge a dagger into my heart Say what you will of philosophy and fortitude; one may laugh at nonsense that has no foundation, but how is it possible to endure that those paltry rascals should have any hold of one?

Digitized by Google

LETTER XLVI.

March 16.

EVERY thing conſpires to drive me to extremities. I met Miſs B--- walking to-day. I could not help joining her, and expreſſing my ſenſe of her altered manner towards me. "Oh! Werter," ſaid ſhe, with eagerneſs, "you who know my heart, how could you ſo ill interpret my diſtreſs? what did I not ſuffer for you from the firſt moment I entered the room! I foreſaw all that has happened; a hundred times was I on the point of mentioning it to you. I knew that the S-----'s and T----'s would quit the aſſembly rather than ſtay in your company. I knew the Count could not break with them: and now all the talk." I endeavoured to conceal my emotion, and aſked her what talk. "Oh! how much it has already coſt me!" ſaid the amiable girl, and tears came into her eyes.---I could ſcarce contain myſelf----I was ready to throw myſelf at her feet. "Explain yourſelf," I cried. Her tears flowed, and I was quite frantic. She wiped them away without endeavouring to hide them. "You know my aunt," ſhe continued; "ſhe was preſent, and, good God! in what a light does ſhe conſider the affair! Werter, what leſſons have I heard laſt night and this morning upon my connection with

Digitized by Google

you! I have been obliged to hear you debaſed and run down; and I could not, I dared not ſay much in your defence." Every word was a dagger; ſhe did not know that in pity to me ſhe ſhould have concealed all that ſhe informed me of. She told me too all the impertinent nonſenſe that would be circulated upon the occaſion, and how the malicious would triumph; how they would rejoice that my pride was humbled; and how happy it would make them, to ſee me puniſhed for that want of eſteem for others, with which I have been often reproached. This is what ſhe told me, and in a manner which ſhewed the warmeſt intereſt; this is what I was forced to hear; it awakened all my paſſions, and I ſtill breathe rage and fury. Would that I could find a man who dared banter me on this event! I would ſacrifice him inſtantly to my reſentment; it would be a relief to me to diſcharge my fury on the firſt object I met; a hundred times have I caught up a ſword to give vent to my oppreſſed heart. There is a noble race of horſes, which will inſtinctively open a vein with their teeth, when they are heated by a long courſe, in order to breathe more freely. I am often tempted to open a vein, and procure for myſelf everlaſting liberty.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XLVII.

March 24.

I HAVE written to court for leave to reſign; and I hope I ſhall obtain it. You will forgive me for not having previouſly conſulted you. It was expedient for me to leave this place.—I knew all you could alledge in order to induce me to ſtay, and therefore——I beg of you to ſoften this news as much as you can to my mother, when you acquaint her with it. I can do nothing for myſelf; how ſhould I do any thing for others? She will undoubtedly be grieved to find, that I have ſtopped ſhort in that career, which would have led directly to my being firſt a privy-counſellor, and then miniſter; and to ſee me thus returning to my original nothing. Argue on the ſubject as much as you will, combine all the reaſons which ſhould have induced me to ſtay; I am going, that is ſufficient. But that you may not be ignorant where I am going, I ſhall tell you that here is the Prince of O——, who is much pleaſed with my company, and who having heard of my intention to reſign, has invited me to his country-houſe, to paſs the ſpring months with him. He aſſures me that I ſhall be left quite at liberty; and as we agree on all ſubjects but one, I ſhall venture to accompany him.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XLVIII.

April 19.

I THANK you for your two letters. I waited for my anſwer from court before I wrote to you. I was under continual apprehenſion leſt my mother ſhould apply to the miniſter in order to defeat my purpoſe. But I have received my diſmiſſion; and here it is. I will not tell you with what regret it was given to me, nor what the miniſter ſaid in his letter to me, for you would renew your lamentations. The money which I ſent to my mother for, I ſhall not want; for the hereditary-prince has made me a preſent; and it was accompanied by a few words which affected me almoſt to tears.

LETTER XLIX.

May 5.

I SET out to-morrow; and as my native place is but ſix miles out of the great road, I have a mind to ſee it, and call back to my re-

Digitized by Google

membrance the happy dreams of my childhood. I shall go in at the same gate which I came through with my mother, when after my father's death she left that delightful retreat to immure herself in your melancholy town. Adieu, my dear friend, you shall hear of my expedition.

LETTER L.

May 9.

I PERFORMED my pilgrimage to the place of my nativity, with all the devotion of a real pilgrim: I was affected much beyond what I expected. Near the great elm, which is a quarter of a league from S——, I got out of the carriage, and sent it on before me, that alone and on foot I might more fully and without interruption enjoy all my recollections. I was then under the same elm which formerly was the term and object of my walks. How things have since changed! Then, in happy ignorance, I languished after a world I did not know, and where I hoped to find all the enjoyments my heart so often felt the want of: and now I was returned from that world so much desired; and what, my dear friend, did

Digitized by Google

I bring back? Disappointed hopes, unsuccessful plans!

I observed the opposite mountains, and I remembered how they had excited my wishes. I used to sit sometimes for whole hours looking at them, and ardently longing to wander under the shade of those woods which make so delightful an object in the distance. With what reluctance I quitted this favourite spot when the play-hour was over, and my leave of absence expired! As I drew near to the village, I recognised all the little gardens and summer-houses that I was acquainted with. I disliked the new ones, as I do all the alterations that have been made since my time. I went into the village, and felt quite at home again. I cannot, my dear friend, in detail relate all the circumstances with which I was affected; however interesting they were to me, there would be a sameness in the relation. I had intended to lodge in the market-place near our old house: as soon as I entered, I perceived that school-room, where we were taught by that good old woman, was turned into a shop. I remembered the sorrow, the dulness, the anxiety, the oppression of heart I had experienced in that confinement. Every step was marked by some particular impression. A pilgrim in the Holy-land does not meet with so many spots which bring tender recollections to his mind; and scarcely feels more devotion. One sensation I will relate of the thousand I experienced: Having followed the course of the stream to a farm, which which was for-

Digitized by Google

merly a favourite walk likewiſe, and where we uſed to divert ourſelves with making ducks and drakes upon the water; I was moſt forcibly ſtruck with the memory of what I then was, when I looked at the water as it flowed, and formed romantic ideas of the countries it was going to paſs through. My imagination was ſoon exhauſted; but the water continued flowing farther and farther, till I was bewildered in the idea of inviſible diſtance. Exactly ſuch, my dear friend, were the thoughts of our good anceſtors. And when Ulyſſes talks of the immeaſureable ſea, and the unlimitted earth, is it not more natural, more true, more according to our feelings, than when in this philoſophic age, every ſchool-boy thinks himſelf a prodigy, becauſe he can repeat after his maſter that the earth is round?

I am at preſent with the Prince at one of his hunting-lodges. He is an honeſt and unaffected man, and I am very well pleaſed with him; what I diſlike, is his talking of things which he has only read or heard of, and always exactly under the ſame point of view that they have been preſented to him. I am ſorry to ſay that he values my underſtanding and talents much more highly than that mind, for which alone I value myſelf——which alone is the ſource of talents, of happineſs, of miſery, of every thing—which makes me all I am, and is ſolely mine——Any body may know all that I know.

Digitized by Google

LETTER LI.

May 25.

I HAD a ſcheme in my head, which I intended to conceal from you till it was accompliſhed; now that it has failed I may as well tell it to you. I had a mind to go into the army; I had long been deſirous of it, and it was my chief reaſon for coming here with the Prince. He is a general in the ſervice of the ——. As we were walking juſt now, I communicated my deſign to him: he did not approve it; and it would have been madneſs not to have yielded to his reaſons.

LETTER LII.

June 11.

SAY what you pleaſe, I can ſtay in this place no longer. What ſhould I do here? I am weary of it. The Prince, it is true, treats me in all reſpects as his equal, but ſtill I am not at my eaſe here. Beſides, we are at bottom very different men. He has a good

Digitized by Google

understanding, but quite of the common kind; and the pleasure I have in his conversation, is only such as I receive from reading a well-written book. I shall stay a week more here, and then travel about again. What I have done best, since I came to this place, are some drawings. The Prince has some taste for the arts, and would have more, if it was not cramped by cold rules and technical terms.—I often lose all patience, when with a glowing imagination I am giving to art and nature the most lively expression, and he stops me with learned criticisms, upon which he highly values himself.

LETTER LIII.

June 18.

WHERE am I going?—I will tell you in confidence; I am obliged to continue here a fortnight longer; after that I thought it would be expedient for me to see the mines of ——. But it is no such thing; I only deceive myself: the real truth is, that I wish to be near Charlotte again. I am not the dupe of my heart, but I obey its dictates.

Digitized by Google

LETTER LIV.

July 29.

OH! No; 'tis well—'tis all well—Me her husband! Eternal power that gave me being, if thou hadst destined such happiness for me, my whole life would have been one continual thanksgiving! But I will not murmur against thee; forgive my tears, forgive my fruitless vows!—She might have been mine; I might have folded in these arms all that is lovely under Heaven! My whole frame is convulsed when Albert puts his arms round her waist.

Shall I say it? And why should I not say it? She would have been happier with me than with him. Albert was not made for her: he wants a certain sensibility; he wants------- in short, their hearts do not beat in unison. Ah! my dear friend, how often in reading an interesting passage, where my heart and Charlotte's seemed to meet; and when our sentiments were unfolded by the story and situation of a fictitious character, how often have I seen and felt, that we were made to understand each other? Alas! my friend!—But this worthy man loves her with all his soul; and what does not such love deserve?

I have been interrupted by an insufferable visit. I have dried up my tears, and my thoughts are a little dissipated. Adieu, my dearest friend.

Digitized by Google

LETTER LV.

August 4.

I AM not alone unfortunate; men are all disappointed in their hopes, and all their schemes fall to the ground. I have been to see the good woman under the lime-trees. The eldest boy ran to meet me; he screamed for joy, and that brought out his mother. She looked very melancholy. "Alas! my good, sir," said she, "our poor little Jenny is dead;" (that was the youngest of her children) I answered nothing----"And my husband," she continued, "came back from Holland without any money: he was taken ill with a fever; and if some good people had not relieved him, he must have been obliged to beg his bread along the road." I could say nothing to her; I gave some money to the boy; and she offered me some apples, which I accepted, and, full of sorrow, left the place.

LETTER LVI.

August 21.

MY sensations change with the rapidity of lightning. Sometimes a ray of joy seems

Digitized by Google

to give me new life.—Alas! it disappears in a moment. When I am thus lost in reveries, I cannot help saying to myself, "If Albert was to die, I should be——yes, Charlotte would"—and I pursue the chimera till it leads me to the edge of a precipice, from which I start back and shudder. When I go out of the same gate, when I take the same road which conducted me the first time towards Charlotte, my heart sinks within me: and I feel with bitterness how different I then was, from what I now am. Yes, all, is vanished. Not a sentiment, not a pulsation of my heart is the same; no traces of the past remain. If the shade of a departed prince could return to visit the superb palaces he had built in happy times, and left to a beloved son; and if he found them overthrown and destroyed by a more powerful neighbour, such would be his sensations.

LETTER LVII.

Sept. 3

I SOMETIMES cannot comprehend how it is that she loves another——how she dares love another, whilst I bear her about me in this heart—whilst she entirely fills and engrosses it—whilst I think only of her, know only her, and have nothing but her in the world.

Digitized by Google

LETTER LVIII.

September 6.

IT coſt me much to part with the blue frock which I wore the firſt time I danced with Charlotte; I could not poſſibly appear in it any longer; but I have made another exactly like it, and with a buff waiſtcoat and breeches.

It has not however the ſame effect upon me. I don't know, but I hope in time it will be as dear to me.

LETTER LIX.

September 15.

ONE is tempted to wiſh one's ſelf at the devil, when one thinks of all the contemptible beings which Heaven ſuffers to crawl upon this earth, without any feeling, without any idea of the things which may be intereſting to others. You remember the walnut-trees at S———, under which I ſat with Charlotte at the worthy old vicar's. Theſe beautiful, theſe beloved trees, how they adorned the parſonage-yard; their ſhade was refreſhing,

Digitized by Google

it was reſpectable; for it carried one back with pleaſing ideas to the good paſtors who planted them. The ſchool-maſter often mentioned the name of him who planted the oldeſt of them. He had it from his grandfather. This vicar was an excellent man, and under theſe trees his reſpectable memory was ever preſent to me. The ſchool-maſter had the tears in his eyes yeſterday, when he told us they were cut down —Cut down!—I could in my fury murder the ruffian who ſtruck the firſt ſtroke: I that ſhould grieve if I had two ſuch trees in my court, and one died of old age; I muſt endure this. I have however, one conſolation—ſuch is ſentiment, the whole village murmurs at it, and I hope the good peaſants will make no more preſents to the vicar's wife, and that ſhe will ſuffer for the miſchief ſhe has done in the pariſh;—for ſhe did it, the wife of the preſent incumbent, (our good old man is dead) a tall, meagre, wrinkled, wan creature, who is ſo far right to diſregard the world, that the world totally diſregards her; an antiquated ſcold, who affects to be learned, pretends to examine the canonical books, lent her aſſiſtance towards the new reformation, moral and critical, of the Chriſtian religion, and ſhrugs up her ſhoulders at the mention of Tavater's enthuſiaſm. Her health is deſtroyed, and hinders her from having any enjoyment here below. Such a being only could have cut down my walnut-trees. No, I cannot get over it. Would you hear her reaſons; the leaves which fell from

Digitized by Google

them made the court wet and dirty; the trees obſtructed the light; little boys threw ſtones at the nuts, and the noiſe affected her nerves, and diſturbed her profound meditations when ſhe was weighing in the balance Kenicott, Semler, and Michaelis. When I found the pariſh was all diſpleaſed, and particularly the old people. I aſked them why they ſuffered it?—Ah! Sir," they ſaid, "when the ſteward orders, what can we poor peaſants do?" However, one thing has happened very well; the ſteward and the vicar (who for once thought to reap ſome advatage from the caprices of his wife) intended to divide the trees between them. The revenue-office being informed of it, took poſſeſſion of the trees, and ſold them to the beſt bidder. There they lie ſtill on the ground. Oh! if I was a ſovereign prince, how I would deal with the vicar, the ſteward, and the revenue-office! But if I was a prince, what ſhould I care for the trees that grew in my country?

LETTER LX.

October 10.

ONLY to look at her dark eyes, is to me happineſs. What grieves me is, that Albert does not ſeem ſo happy as he expected to be—as I ſhould have been—if---I don't much love

Digitized by Google

ſuſpenſions; but here I cannot expreſs myſelf any otherwiſe. Heavens! and am I not explicit enough?

LETTER LXI.

October 12.

OSSIAN has taken the place of Homer in my heart and imagination. To what a world does the illuſtrious bard carry me! To wander in heaths and wilds, ſurrounded by impetuous whirlwinds, in which, by the feeble light of the moon, we diſcover the ſpirits of our anceſtors: to hear from the top of the mountains, amidſt the roaring of the waters, their plaintive ſounds iſſuing from deep caverns, and the ſorrowful lamentations of a maiden who ſighs and dies on the moſſy tomb of the warrior by whom ſhe was adored! I meet this bard with ſilver hair; he wanders in the valley, he ſeeks the footſteps of his fathers. Alas! he finds only their tombs! Then contemplating the pale moon as ſhe ſinks beneath the waves of the foaming ſea, the memory of time paſt ſtrikes the mind of the hero; thoſe times when the approach of danger filled his heart with exultation, and gave vigour to his nerves; when the moon ſhone upon his bark, laden with the ſpoils of his enemies, and lighted up his triumph: when I read in his countenance

Digitized by Google

his deep ſorrow! when I ſee his ſinking glory tottering towards the grave; when he caſts a look on the cold earth which is to cover him, and cries out, "The traveller will come, he will come who has ſeen my beauty, and he will aſk, where is the bard, where is the illuſtrious ſon of Fingall? he will walk over my tomb, and he will ſeek me in vain. Then, Oh! my friend! I could inſtantly, like a true and noble knight, draw my ſword, and reſcue my prince from long and painful languor, and afterwards plunge it into my own breaſt, to follow the demi-god whom my hand ſet free.

LETTER LXII.

October 30.

ALAS! the void, the fearful void I feel in my boſom. Sometimes I think if I could but once, only once preſs her to my heart, I ſhould be happy.

LETTER LXIII.

October 26.

I AM convinced, my dear friend, more and more convinced, that the exiſtence of

Digitized by Google

any one being whatever is of little, very little consequence. A friend of Charlotte's came just now to make her a visit: I withdrew, and took up a book in the next room; but I could not read, and therefore I write to you. I hear their conversation: they are only talking of the news of the town; one is going to be married, another is ill, very ill. "She has a dry cough and frequent faintings; she cannot recover," says one. "N— is very ill too," says Charlotte. "He begins to swell already," answers the other. And my imagination suddenly carries me to their sick beds; I see them struggling against approaching death, in all the agonies of pain and horror. I see them —And these good little women are talking of it with the same indifference that one would mention the death of a stranger. And when I look at the apartment in which I now am, when I see Charlotte's apparel lying round me; here upon this little table are her earrings, Albert's papers, all things are so familiar to me, the very ink-stand I now use; and that I think what I am to this family—every thing; my friends esteem me, are made happy by me, and my heart cannot conceive that any thing could exist without them; and yet if I was now to go, if I was to quit this circle, would they feel, how long would they feel that void in their life, which the loss of me would leave: How long---yes, such is the frailty of man, that there where he most feels his own existence, where his presence makes a real and a strong impression, even in the memory of

Digitized by Google

thoſe who are dear to him; there alſo he muſt periſh and vaniſh away, and that ſo quickly!

LETTER LXIV.

Oct. 27

I COULD tear open my boſom, I could beat my head againſt the wall, when I ſee how difficult it is to communicate our ideas, our ſenſations, to others; to make them enter entirely into our feelings. I cannot receive from another the love, the joy, the warmth, the pleaſure, that I do not naturally poſſeſs; nor with a heart glowing with the moſt lively affection, can I make the happineſs of one in whom the ſame warmth and energy are not inherent.

LETTER LXV.

Oct. 30.

A HUNDRED times have I been upon the point of catching her in my arms! What torment it is to ſee ſuch lovelineſs, ſuch charms,

Digitized by Google

passing and repassing continually before one, and not dare to touch them! To touch is so natural: Do not children touch every thing that they see? and I———

LETTER LXVI.

November 3.

HOW often when I have lain down in my bed have I wished never to wake again?---and in the morning I open my eyes, I again behold the sun, and I am wretched. Oh! why am I not fanciful and hypochondrical? Why cannot I attribute my woes to intemperate seasons, to disappointed ambition, to the persecutions of an enemy? for then this insupportable load of discontent would not rest wholly upon myself. But, wretched that I am! I feel it but too sensibly, I alone am the cause of my unhappiness; this same bosom which formerly contained a source of delight, is now the source of all my torments. Am I not the same man who formerly felt only agreeable sensations? who every step he took saw Paradise before him, and whose heart was expanded, and full of benevolence to the whole world. But this heart is now dead, dead to all sentiment; my eyes are dry, and my senses no longer refreshed by soft tears, wither away,

Digitized by Google

and perish, and consume my brain. My sufferings are great: I have lost the only charm of my life; that active sacred power which created worlds around me; it is no more. From my window I see the distant hills; the rising sun breaks through the mists, opens wide the prospect, and illuminates the country. I see the soft stream gently winding thro' the willows stripped of their leaves. Nature display all her beauties before me, exhibits the most enchanting scenes, and my heart is unmoved; I remain blind, insensible, petrified. Often have I implored Heaven for tears, as the labourer prays for dews to moisten the parched corn.

But, I feel it, God does not grant sunshine or rain to importunate entreaties. Those times, the memory of which now torments me, why were they so fortunate? it was because I then waited for the blessing of the Eternal with patience, and received them with a grateful and feeling heart.

LETTER LXVII.

Nov. 17.

CHARLOTTE has reproved me for my excesses, with so much tenderness and goodness:—— In order to forget myself, my

Digitized by Google

dear friend, I have for ſome time paſt drank more wine than uſual—" Don't do it," ſaid ſhe; " think of Charlotte."---The neceſſary advice to think of Charlotte!---I do think of you, and yet 'tis not *thinking* of you; you are always before my eyes, you are in my heart:---This very morning I was ſitting in the place where you ſtopped the laſt time. Immediately ſhe changed the ſubject. My dear friend, I am no longer any thing, ſhe makes me juſt what ſhe pleaſes.

LETTER LXVIII.

Nov. 15.

I THANK you, my good friend, for intereſting yourſelf ſo kindly in what relates to me, and for the good advice you give me; and I beg of you to make yourſelf eaſy. Leave me to my ſufferings; ſurrounded as I am, I have ſtill ſtrength enough to endure them to the end. I revere our religion; you know I do; I am ſenſible that it often gives ſtrength to the feeble, and comfort to the afflicted.---But has it, ſhould it have this effect on all men equally:---Conſider this vaſt univerſe, and you will find millions for whom it never has exiſted: and millions, whether it is preached to them or not, for whom it never will exiſt.

Digitized by Google

—Do not give a wrong conſtruction to this, I beg of you. I do not love vain diſputes on ſubjects which we are all equally ignorant of. What is the deſtiny of man?—to fill up the meaſure of his ſufferings, and drink up the bitter draught.—And if the cup appeared bitter even to the Son of the Moſt High, why ſhould I affect a fooliſh pride, and ſay my cup is ſweet? Why ſhould I be aſhamed to tremble in that fearful moment, when my ſoul ſhall be ſuſpended between exiſtence and annihilation —when diſſolution, like a flaſh of lightning, ſhall illuminate the dark gulf of futurity—— when every thing ſhakes around me, and the whole world vaniſhes away?——This is the voice of a creature oppreſſed beyond all reſource, and who feels with terror that he cannot eſcape deſtruction.—"My God! my God! why haſt thou forſaken me?"—Should I be aſhamed to uſe the expreſſion?——He who ſpreads out the Heavens as it were a garment, felt terror himſelf.

LETTER LXIX.

November 20.

CHARLOTTE does not know, does not feel, that ſhe is preparing for me a poiſon which will deſtroy us both; and this deadly

Digitized by Google

poiſon which ſhe preſents to me I ſwallow it in large draughts. What mean thoſe looks of kindneſs which ſhe ſometimes beſtows upon me, that complacency with which ſhe hears the ſentiments that ſometimes eſcape me, and the tender pity which appears in her countenance? Yeſterday when I took leave of her, ſhe held out her hand to me, and ſaid, "Adieu, my dear Werter.----*Dear Werter.*----It was the firſt time ſhe ever called me dear: the ſound ſunk deep into my heart; I have repeated it a hundred times ſince; and when I went to bed, I ſaid, "Good night, *my dear Werter.*----I recollected myſelf, and laughed.

LETTER LXX.

Nov. 16.

CHARLOTTE is ſenſible of my ſufferings. I found her alone, and was ſilent: ſhe looked ſtedfaſtly at me; the fire of genius, the charms of beauty were fled. But I ſaw in her countenance an expreſſion much more touching;—the expreſſion of ſoft pity, and the tendereſt concern.---Why was I withheld from throwing myſelf at her feet?---Why did I not dare to take her in my arms, and anſwer her by a thouſand kiſſes?---She had recourſe to her harp-

Digitized by Google

ſichord, and in a low and ſweet voice accompanied it with melodious ſounds. Her lips never appeared ſo lovely; they ſeemed but juſt to open to receive the notes of the inſtrument, and return half the vibration.---But who could expreſs ſuch ſenſations!---I was ſoon overcome, and bending down, I pronounced this vow, "Beautiful lips which celeſtial ſpirits guard, never will I ſeek to profane you." And yet I wiſh---Oh! my friend! 'tis like drawing a curtain before my heart----only to taſte this felicity, and die and expiate my crimes.------ My crimes!

LETTER LXXI.

Nov. 30.

IT is all over; I ſee it, my fate is decided. Every thing increaſes my woes; every thing points out my deſtiny. To-day again.

I went to walk by the river-ſide, about dinner-time, for I could not eat. The country was gloomy and deſerted; a cold and damp eaſterly wind blew from the mountains, and black heavy clouds ſpread over the plain. I perceived a man at a diſtance in an old great coat; he was wandering amongſt the rocks, and ſeemed to be looking for plants. When I came up to him, he turned about, and I ſaw an in-

Digitized by Google

tereſting countenance with all the marks of a ſettled melancholy; his fine black hair was flowing on his ſhoulders. "What are you looking for, friend?" ſaid I. He anſwered with a deep ſigh, "I am looking for flowers, and I can't find any." But this is not the ſeaſon for flowers," ſaid I. "There are ſo many flowers," he ſaid, "I have in my garden, roſes and honey-ſuckles of two ſorts, one of them I had from my father; they grow every where: I have been two whole days looking for them, There are flowers too above there, yellow, and blue, and red, and that centaury which grows in ſuch pretty cluſters; I can find none of them." I aſked him what he intended to do with theſe flowers. He ſmiled, and holding up his finger with a myſterious air, ſaid, "Don't betray me, I have promiſed my miſtreſs a noſegay.---"You did well," ſaid I. "Oh! ſhe has every thing," he anſwered, "ſhe is very rich;"---"And yet," ſaid I, "ſhe likes your noſegays," "Oh! ſhe has jewels and a crown!" he exclaimed. I aſked who ſhe was? "If the States-general would pay me," he cried out, I ſhould be quite another man! Alas! there was a time when I was ſo happy; but that time is paſt, and I am now"——He raiſed his ſwimming eyes to Heaven.---"You were then happy!" I ſaid. "Alas! why am I not ſtill the ſame;" ſaid he. "I was ſo well, ſo gay, ſo contented---I was like a fiſh in the water." An old woman who was coming towards us, called out, "Henry, Henry! where are you; we have been looking every where for you——

Digitized by Google

come to dinner!" Is that your ſon," I aſked her, " Yes, my poor unfortunate ſon," ſaid ſhe; " the Lord has ſent us this affliction." I aſked whether he had long been in that ſtate? " it is about ſix months," ſhe anſwered, " ſince he has been calm as he is now, and I thank Heaven for it; he was one whole year quite raving, and chained down in a mad-houſe; now he does no harm to any body, but he talks of nothing but kings and emperors. He was a very good young man, and helped to maintain me: he wrote a very fine hand; and all of a ſudden he became melancholy, was ſeized with a burning fever, grew diſtracted, and is now as you ſee. If I was to tell you, ſir-----" I interrupted her by aſking at what time it was that he boaſted of having been ſo happy. " Poor boy," ſaid ſhe, with a ſmile of compaſſion, " it is the time in which he was entirely out of his ſenſes; he never ceaſes to regret it: it is the time when he was confined, and abſolutely raving." I was thunderſtruck. I put ſome money into his hand, and went away.

" You were happy!" I exclaimed, as I walked haſtily back towards the town; " you were like a fiſh in the water!" God of Heaven! is this the deſtiny of man! is he only happy before he poſſeſſes his reaſon, and after he has loſt it! You are unfortunate, and I envy your lot: Full of hopes you go to gather flowers for your Princeſs---in winter! and are grieved not to find any, and don't know why they cannot be found.---But as for me, I wan-

Digitized by Google

der without hope, without design, and I return as I came. To your disordered fancy it appears that if the States-general paid you, you should be a man of consequence; and happy it is for you that you can attribute your sufferings to any foreign power. You do not know, you do not feel that your wretchedness is in your agitated heart, in your disordered brain, and that all the kings and potentates on earth cannot restore you.

Let their death be without consolation, who can laugh at the sick man that travels to distant springs, only to find an accumulation of disease, and a death more painful? or that can exult over a depressed mind, who to attain peace of conscience, to alleviate his miseries, makes a pilgrimage to the Holy Land! Every step which wrings his feet in unbeaten paths is a drop of balm to his soul, and each night brings new relief to his heart.---Will you dare to call this extravagance!---you that raise yourselves upon stilts to make pompous declamations?----Extravagance!---O God, thou see'st my tears!---thou hast given unto us a sufficient portion of misery, must we also have brethren that persecute us, that would deprive us of all consolation, and take away our trust in thee, in thy love and mercy? The vine which strengthens us, the root which heals us, come from thy hand. Relief and saving health are thine---Father! whom I know not! thou who were wont to fill my soul, but thou hidest thy face from me:---call me back, speak to my heart; in vain thy silence would delay

Digitized by Google

a ſoul which thirſts after thee. What father would be wrathful againſt his ſon, if he appeared ſuddenly before him, and fell on his neck, and cried out, "Oh! my father, forgive me if I have ſhortened my journey, if I am returned before the appointed time:—The world is every where the ſame: labour and pain, pleaſure and reward, all were alike indifferent to me. I find happineſs only in thy preſence, and here let me remain whatever is my fate. And would'ſt thou heavenly and adored Father, baniſh this child from thy awful preſence?

LETTER LXXII.

Dec. 1.

MY dear friend, the man I deſcribed to you, the man ſo enviable in his misfortunes, was ſecretary to Charlotte's father. He conceived an unhappy paſſion for her; he cheriſhed, concealed, and at length diſcovered it —was diſmiſſed, and became ſuch as I yeſterday ſaw him. Think what an impreſſion theſe few words made upon me which Albert repeated with as much tranquillity, as perhaps you read them.

Digitized by Google

LETTER LXXIII.

Dec. 6.

IT is all over, my dear friend; I can ſupport this no longer. To-day I was ſitting by Charlotte: ſhe was playing on her harpſichord with an expreſſion it is impoſſible for me to deſcribe to you. Her little ſiſter was dreſſing her doll upon my lap; the tears came into my eyes; I leaned down, and looked intently on her wedding-ring; my tears fell;—immediately ſhe began to play the favourite, the divine air which has ſo often enchanted me. I felt comforted by it; but it ſoon recalled to my mind the times that are paſt.—Grief, diſappointed hopes. I began to walk with haſty ſtrides about the room——I was choaked. At length I went up to her, and with eagerneſs ſaid, "For Heaven's ſake play that no longer." She ſtopped, looked ſtedfaſtly at me, and ſaid, with a ſmile that ſunk deep into my heart, "Werter, you are indeed very ill; your moſt favourite food diſguſts you. Pray go and try to compoſe yourſelf." I tore myſelf from her.——Great God thou ſee'ſt my torments, and thou wilt put an end to them!

Digitized by Google

LETTER LXXIV.

Dec. 6.

HOW her image haunts me!—Awake or asleep her image is ever present to my soul! Soon as I close my eyes, here in this brain where all my nerves are concentred, her dark eyes are imprinted. Hers—I don't know how to describe it: but if I shut my eyes, hers are immediately before me like a sea, like a precipice, and they occupy all the fibres of my head. What is man! that boasted demi-god! his strength fails him when he most wants it;—and whether he swims in pleasure, or bends under a load of sorrow, he is forced to stop; and whilst he is grasping at infinity, finds he must return again to his first cold existence.

LETTER LXXV.

Dec. 8.

I FEEL, as those wretches must have felt who were formerly supposed to be possessed by devils. Sometimes I am seized with strange starts and motions; it is not agony, it is not passion, it is an interior secret rage which tears

Digitized by Google

my bosom, and seems to seize my throat.——Wretch that I am!——Then I run, and wander amidst the dark and gloomy scenes which this unfriendly season exhibits. Last night I felt thus constrained to go out of the town. I had been told that the river, and all the brooks in the neighbourhood, had overflown their banks, and that my favourite valley was under water. I ran thither at past eleven o'clock. It was a gloomy and awful sight!—the moon was behind a cloud, but by means of a few scattered rays I could perceive the foaming waves rolling over the fields and meadows, and beating against the bushes; the whole valley was a stormy sea, tossed by furious winds. The moon then appeared again, and rested on a dark cloud; the splendour of her light increased the disorder of Nature. The echoes repeated and redoubled the roarings of the winds and the waters. drew near to the precipice; I wished, and shuddered; I stretched out my arms, I leaned over, I sighed, and lost myself in the happy thought of burying all my sufferings, all my torments, in that abyss and tossing amidst the waves. Why were my feet rooted to the earth? why could I not thus have put an end to my misery?—But I feel it, my dear friend, my hour is not yet come. With what delight should I have changed my nature, and have incorporated with the whirlwinds to rend the clouds and disturb the waters! Perhaps I may one day quit my prison, and taste these pleasures.

Digitized by Google

I looked sorrowfully down upon a little spot where I had sat under a willow by the side of Charlotte, after a summer's walk; that also was under water. I could hardly distinguish the tree. Alas! then thought of the meadows, the fields round the hunting-lodge; the walks, the green recesses, now perhaps laid waste by the torrent; and the memory of time for ever lost entered my heart. Thus to the sleeping captive dreams recall all the blessings he is deprived of. I stopped ——I don't reproach myself, I have the courage to die; I should have.——I am now like an old and wretched woman, who picks dry sticks along the hedge-side, and begs bread from door to door, to prolong for a few moments her feeble and miserable existence.

LETTER LXXVI.

Dec. 17.

I KNOW not how it is, my dear friend, my imagination is full of terror! is not my love for her the purest and the most sacred? is it not the love of a brother for his sister? Did ever my heart form a wish that was criminal?—I will make no vows—And now a dream.—Oh! they were much in the right who attributed contending passions to powers

Digitized by Google

that are foreign to us!—This very night——I tremble as I write it---this very night I held her in my arms, I preſſed her to my boſom, devoured her trembling lips with kiſſes. The moſt melting ſoftneſs was in her eyes, in mine equal extaſy.---When I now at this moment recal theſe tranſports with delight, am I guilty of a crime?—Oh! Charlotte, Charlotte! 'tis all over;—my ſenſes are diſordered, and for theſe ſeven days I have not been myſelf;---my eyes are full of tears;---all places are alike to me; in none am I at peace;---I deſire nothing, I aſk nothing ——Ah! 'twere better far that I ſhould depart!

(*The* EDITOR *to the* READER.)

[IN order to give a connected account of the laſt days of Werter, I am obliged to interrupt the courſe of his letters by a narration; the materials for which were furniſhed to me by Charlotte, Albert, his own ſervant, and ſome other witneſſes.

The paſſion of Werter had inſenſibly diminiſhed the harmony which ſubſiſted between Charlotte and her huſband. The affection of Albert for his wife was ſincere, but calm, and had by degrees given place to his buſineſs. He did not indeed own even to himſelf, that there

Digitized by Google

was this difference between the days of courtſhip and the days of marriage; but he felt a certain diſpleaſure at the marked attentions of Werter. It was an infringement of his right, and a kind of tacit reproof. This idea increaſed the diſſatisfaction he felt from buſineſs that was continually accumulating, that was full of difficulties, and for which he was but indifferently paid. The grief which preyed on Werter's heart had exhauſted the ſtrength of his genius; he had loſt his vivacity, and his quick perceptions; in ſociety he appeared joyleſs and flat. This diſpoſition had of courſe an influence upon Charlotte, who ſaw him every day; and ſhe fell into a ſort of melancholy; which Albert attributed to the progreſs of her attachment to her lover, and Werter to the deep concern ſhe felt for the alteration in Albert's conduct towards her. The want of confidence in theſe two friends made their ſociety irkſome to each other. Albert avoided going to his wife's apartment when Werter was there; and Werter, who perceived it, after ſome fruitleſs efforts to deſiſt, took thoſe opportunities to ſee her, when he knew Albert was engaged. Diſcontent and bitterneſs of heart encreaſed; till at length Albert very drily told his wife, that were it for the ſake of appearance only, ſhe ſhould behave differently to Werter, and not ſee him ſo often. About the ſame time, this unfortunate young man was confirmed in his reſolution to quit this world. It had long been his moſt favourite thought, and particularly

Digitized by Google

since his return to the neighbourhood of Charlotte. He had always encouraged it, but he would not commit such an action with precipitation and rashness; he was determined to take this step like a man who knows what he is doing, is resolved and firm, but calm and tranquil. His doubts and struggles may be seen by the following fragment, which was found without any date amongst his papers, and which appears to have been the beginning of a letter to his friend.]

——Her presence, her fate, the interest she shews for mine, have power still to draw some tears from my withered brain!

One lifts up the curtain; one passes to the other side—that is all;—And why all these delays? why all these fears?—Because we know not what is behind—because there is no returning—and we suppose that all is darkness and confusion where there is uncertainty.

[His mortification when he was secretary to the ambassador, was never effaced from his memory. Whenever he mentioned it, which did not often happen, it was easy to perceive that he thought his honour irrecoverably wounded by that adventure; and it gave him a distaste for public affairs, and all political business. He then gave way entirely to those singular opinions and sentiments which are to be met with in these letters; and to a passion which knew no bounds, and which was destined to consume all his remaining vigour. The continual sameness and sadness of his in-

Digitized by Google

tercourſe with the moſt amiable and beloved of women, whoſe peace he diſturbed—his conflicts and ſtruggles,—and the ſeeing his life paſs away without end or deſign, drove him at length to put an end to his exiſtence.]

LETTER LXXVII.

Dec. 20.

I MUST depart!—I thank you for having repeated the word ſo ſeaſonably.——Yes, it is undoubtedly better that I ſhould depart.—— However, I do not entirely approve the ſcheme of returning to your neighbourhood: at leaſt I ſhould like to make a tour in my way; particularly as one may expect a froſt, and conſequently good roads. I am much pleaſed with your intention of coming to fetch me; I only deſire you to defer your journey for a fortnight, and to wait for another letter from me. One ſhould gather nothing before it is ripe, and a fortnight ſooner or later makes a great difference. Deſire my mother to think of me in her prayers; and tell her I ſincerely aſk her pardon for all the unhappineſs I have occaſioned her. I was doomed to give ſorrow to all thoſe whoſe happineſs I ought to have promoted. Adieu! my dear, my deareſt friend. May all the bleſſings of heaven attend you. Adieu.

Digitized by Google

[The same day (which was the Sunday before Christmas) Werter went in the evening to Charlotte's house, and found her alone. She was busy preparing little gifts for her brothers and sisters, which were to be distributed on Christmas-eve. He began talking of the delight of the children, and of that age when the opening of the door, and the sudden appearance of the desert decorated up with wax-candles, causes such transports of joy—"You shall have a gift too, if you behave well," said Charlotte, hiding her embarrassment under a sweet smile. "What do you call behaving well," said he, "my dear Charlotte?" She answered, "Thursday night is Christmas-eve: the children are all to be here, and my father too; there is a present for each; do you come likewise—but do not come before that time." —Werter was struck—"I desire you will not; it must be so; I ask it of you as a favour; it is for my own peace and tranquillity that I ask it; we must not go on in this manner any longer." He turned away his face, walked hastily up and down the room, and muttered between his teeth, "We must not go on in this manner any longer." Charlotte seeing the violent agitation into which these words had thrown him, endeavoured to divert his thoughts by different questions; but it was in vain. "No, Charlotte," said he, "I will never see you more!" "And why so, Werter? we may, we must, see one another again, only let it be with more discretion. Oh! why were you born with that impetuosity—with

Digitized by Google

that exceſſive---that ungovernable paſſion for every thing that is dear to you?" Then taking his hand, ſhe ſaid, "Let me beg of you to be more calm; what a variety of pleaſure and entertainment, your fine underſtanding, your genius and talents may furniſh you:—be yourſelf, and get the better of an unfortunate attachment to me, who can only pity you."--- He bit his lips, and looked at her with a dark and angry countenance. She continued to hold his hand—"Grant me a moment's patience, Werter?---Do you not ſee that you are deceiving yourſelf, that you are ſeeking your own deſtruction? Why muſt it be only me---me who belong to another?---I fear, I much fear, that the impoſſibility only of poſſeſſing me, makes the deſire of it ſo ſtrong." He drew back his hand, and with wild and angry looks fixed his eyes on her—"'Tis well!" he exclaimed, "'tis very well!---Did not Albert furniſh you with this reflection?---'tis a very profound one." "It is a reflection that any one might very eaſily make," ſhe anſwered: "What! is there not in the whole world, one woman who is at liberty, and who has the power to make you happy? Get the better of yourſelf; look for ſuch a woman, and believe me when I tell you that you will certainly find her. I have long apprehended for you, and for us all, the ſmall circle to which you have confined yourſelf—Make an effort; a journey may and will diſſipate you. Seek and find an object worthy your tenderneſs; then return

Digitized by Google

here, and enjoy with us all the happineſs that can ariſe from the moſt perfect friendſhip."

"This ſpeech, my dear Charlotte," ſaid Werter, with a ſmile, but full of acrimony, "ought to be printed for the improvement of all teachers; allow me but a little time longer, and all will be well."——"But, however, Werter, don't come before Chriſtmas-eve," ſhe ſaid. He was going to reply, when Albert came in. Werter and he coolly ſaluted each other, and with apparent embarraſſment walked up and down the room. They began to converſe on different ſubjects, but without connection, and they were ſoon dropped. Albert aſked his wife about ſome commiſſions he had given her; and finding they were not executed, he made uſe of ſome harſh expreſſions, which pierced the heart of Werter. He wiſhed to go, but had not power to move; and in this ſituation he remained till eight o'clock; uneaſineſs of temper and acrimony continually increaſing; till at length the cloth was laid, and he took leave, whilſt Albert very coldly aſked him, if he would not ſtay ſupper.

Werter returned home, took the candle from his ſervant, and went up to his room alone. He was heard talking with great earneſtneſs, and walking haſtily in his room in a paſſion of tears. At length, without undreſſing, he threw himſelf on the bed; where his ſervant found him at eleven o'clock, when he ventured to go in and take off his boots. Werter did not prevent him, but ordered him not to come in the morning till he rung.

Digitized by Google

Monday morning, the 21st of December, he wrote the following letter, which was found sealed on his bureau after his death, and given to Charlotte. I shall insert it in fragments, as it appears by several circumstances to have been written.]

[IT is all over.—Charlotte, I am resolved to die;---I tell it you deliberately and coolly, without any romantic passion. The morning of that day on which I am to see you for the last time; at the very moment when you read these lines, Oh! best of women! a cold grave holds the inanimate remains of that agitated unhappy man, who in the last moments of his life knew no pleasure so great as that of conversing with you. I have passed a dreadful night——or rather let me call it a propitious one: for it has determined me, it has fixed my purpose—I am resolved to die. When I tore myself from you yesterday, my senses were in the greatest tumult and disorder, my heart was oppressed; hope and every ray of pleasure were fled for ever from me; and a petrifying cold seemed to surround my wretched being.—I could scarcely reach my room—I threw myself on my knees. Heaven for the last time granted me the consolation of shedding tears. My troubled soul was agitated by a thousand ideas, a thousand different schemes! at length one thought took possession of me, and is now fixed in my heart.---I will die---It is not despair, it is conviction that I have filled up the measure of my sufferings, that I have reached the term, and that I sacrifice myself for you.

Digitized by Google

Yes, Charlotte, why ſhould I not ſay it? It is neceſſary for one of us three to depart—it ſhall be Werter.—Oh! my dear Charlotte! this heart, governed by rage and fury, has often conceived the horrid idea of murdering your huſband—you—myſelf—I muſt then depart. When in the fine evenings of ſummer, you walk towards the mountains, think of me; recollect the t mes you have ſo often ſeen me come up from the valley;—raiſe your eyes to the church-yard which contains my grave; and by the light of the departing ſun, ſee how the evening breeze waves the high graſs which grows over me!—I was calm when I began my letter; but the recollection of theſe ſcenes makes me cry like a child.

[About ten in the morning, Werter called his ſervant; and as he was dreſſing, told him he ſhould go in a few days, bid him lay his clothes in order, call in his bills, fetch home the books he had lent, and give two months pay to the poor people who were uſed to receive a weekly allowance from him. He breakfaſted in his room; and then mounted his horſe, and went to make a viſit to the ſteward, who was not at home. He walked penſively in the garden, and ſeemed as if he wiſhed to renew all the ideas that were moſt painful to him. The children did not ſuffer him to remain long alone; they all went in purſuit of him, and ſkipping and dancing round him, told him, that after to-morrow, and to-morrow, and one day more, they were to have their Chriſtmas-gift from Charlotte;

Digitized by Google

and described to him the wonderful things their little imaginations had formed expectations of. "To-morrow," said he, "and to-morrow, and one day more!"—and he kissed them tenderly. He was going, but the little one stopped him, to whisper in his ear, that his brother had wrote fine compliments upon the new year,—very fine indeed, and very long,—one for papa, and one for Albert and Charlotte, and one for Mr. Werter too; and that they were to be presented very early in the morning on New-year's-day.

This last stroke quite overcame him. He gave something to each of the children, got upon his horse, and charging them to give his compliments to their papa, left them with tears in his eyes. He returned home about five o'clock, and ordered his servant to keep up the fire; told him to pack up his books and linen at the bottom of the trunk, and to lay his coats at the top.—He then appears to have wrote the following fragment of his letter to Charlotte.]

—You do not expect me;—you think I shall obey you, and that I shall not see you again till Christmas-eve. Oh! Charlotte! to-day or never! On Christmas-eve you will hold in your hand this paper; you will tremble, and you will wet it with your tears.—I ought—I will—I am well pleased that I have fixed my resolution!

[At half an hour after six he went to Albert's; he found only Charlotte at home, who was much distressed at seeing him. She had,

Digitized by Google

in converſation with her huſband, mentioned with ſeeming negligence, that Werter would not come there again till Chriſtmas-eve; and very ſoon afterwards Albert ordered his horſe, and notwithſtanding the rain, ſet out in order to ſettle ſome buſineſs with a ſteward in the neighbourhood. Charlotte knew that he had for a long time delayed making this viſit, which was to keep him a night from home. She felt his want of confidence, and was hurt. Alone, and full of ſorrow, ſhe recalled her paſt life, and found no cauſe of reproach either in her ſentiments or her conduct, or with regard to her huſband, from whom ſhe had a right to expect happineſs, and who was now the cauſe of her miſery. She then thought of Werter, and blamed, but could not hate him. A ſecret ſympathy had attached her to him from their firſt acquaintance; and now, after ſo long an intimacy, after paſſing through ſo many difficult ſcenes, the impreſſion was engraved on her mind for ever. At length her full heart was relieved by tears, and ſhe fell into a ſoft melancholy, in which ſhe was quite wrapt and loſt; when with infinite aſtoniſhment and emotions ſhe heard Werter upon the ſtairs, aſking if ſhe was at home. It was too late to deny herſelf, and ſhe had not recovered her confuſion when he came in. "You have not kept your word," ſhe cried out.--"I did not promiſe any thing," he anſwered.---"But for both our ſakes," ſaid Charlotte, you ſhould have granted what I aſked of you." She ſent to ſome of her

Digitized by Google

friends, and desired them to come, that they might be witnesses of the conversation; with the idea too, that Werter, thinking himself obliged to wait upon them home, would go away the sooner.----He had brought some books; she talked to him of them, and of some others, and introduced various indifferent subjects, whilst she was expecting her friends; but the servant brought back their excuses—one was engaged with company, and another prevented by the rain.

This unlucky circumstance at first made Charlotte uneasy, but the consciousness of her own innocence at length inspired her with a noble confidence; and above the chimeras of Albert's brain, and conscious of her own purity of heart, she rejected her first intention of calling in her maid: and after playing two or three minutes on the harpsichord to recover herself, she went with great composure and sat down by Werter on the sofa. "Have you nothing to read to me?" she said—He answered, "No."——Open that drawer," said Charlotte, and you will find your own translation of some of the songs of Ossian; I have not read it;—I have been waiting till you could read it to me yourself, but for some time past you have been good for nothing. He smiled, went to fetch the manuscript, and shuddered as he took it up. He sat down with eyes swimming in tears, and began to read.——After reading for some time, he came to that affecting passage, where Armin deplores the loss of his beloved daughter.

Digitized by Google

" ALONE on the ſea-beat rock my daughter was heard to complain. Frequent and loud were her cries; nor could her father relieve her. All night I ſtood on the ſhore. I ſaw her by the faint beam of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind, and the rain beat hard on the ſide of the mountain. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak? it died away like the evening breeze amongſt the graſs of the rocks. Spent with grief ſhe expired; and left thee, Armin, alone! Gone is my ſtrength in the war; and fallen my pride amongſt women!

" When the ſtorms of the mountain come, when the north lifts the waves on high, I ſit by the founding ſhore, and look on the fatal rock. Often by the ſetting moon I ſee the ghoſts of my children. Half-viewleſs they walk in mournful conference together. Will none of you ſpeak in pity! They do not regard their father. I am ſad, O Carmor! nor ſmall my cauſe of woe."

A flood of tears ſtreamed from the eyes of Charlotte, and gave ſome relief to the oppreſſion of heart which ſhe felt. Werter threw down the paper, ſeized her hand, and wept over it. She leaned on the other arm, and held her handkerchief to her eyes. They were both of them in the utmoſt agitation. In this unhappy ſtory they felt their own misfortunes; together they felt them, and their tears flowed from the ſame ſource. The ardent eyes and lips of Werter were rivetted

Digitized by Google

to her arm. She trembled, and wished to go from him; but sorrow and soft compassion pressed upon her and weighed her down. At length she heaved a deep sigh to recover herself, and sobbing, desired him to go on. Werter, quite exhausted, took up the manuscript, and in broken accents, continued:

"Why dost thou awake me, O gale? it seems to say, I am covered with the drops of Heaven. The time of my fading is near, and the blast that shall scatter my leaves To-morrow shall the traveller come; he that saw me in my beauty shall come; his eyes will search the field, but they will not find me."

[The whole force of these words fell like a stroke of thunder on the heart of the unfortunate Werter. In his despair he threw himself at Charlotte's feet, seized her hands, and put them to his eyes and to his forehead. An apprehension of his fatal project for the first time struck her: her senses were bewildered; she pressed his hands, pressed them to her bosom, and leaning towards him with emotions of tender pity, her warm cheek touched his. Then they lost sight of every thing; the whole world disappeared from before their eyes. He clasped her in his arms, strained her to his bosom, and covered her trembling lips with passionate kisses. "Werter!" she cried in a faint voice, and turned her face from him: "Werter!" and with a feeble hand put him from her. At length, with the firm and determined voice of virtue, she cried, "Werter!" and he was awed by it; and tearing himself

Digitized by Google

from her arms, fell on his knees before her. Charlotte roſe, and with diſordered grief, and in a voice of love, mixed with reſentment, ſaid, "This is the laſt time, Werter; you will never ſee me more!" She caſt one laſt tender look upon her unfortunate lover, then ran into her room, and bolted the door. Werter held out his arms to her, but did not dare to detain her. He continued on the ground with his head reſting on the ſofa, for above half an hour, till he heard a noiſe;—it was the ſervant coming to lay the cloth. He then walked up and down the room; and when he was again left alone, he went to Charlotte's door, and in a low voice, ſaid, "Charlotte! Charlotte! but one word more, only one adieu." He ſtopped and liſtened. She made no anſwer.——He entreated—liſtened again! then tore himſelf from the place, crying, "Adieu, Charlotte!——Adieu, for ever!"

[Werter ran to the gate of the town; the guard knew him, and let him paſs. The night was dark and ſtormy; it rained and ſnowed. He came in about eleven. His ſervant perceived he was without a hat, but did not venture to ſay any thing; and when he undreſſed his maſter, he found his cloaths were all wet. His hat was afterwards found upon the point of a rock, where it is inconceivable that he could climb in ſuch a night without breaking his neck.——He went to bed, and ſlept till late next day. His ſervant found him writing when he carried his coffee to him.

Digitized by Google

He was adding what follows to Charlotte's letter.]

——For the laſt, laſt time, I now open my eyes. Alas! they will behold the ſun no more, a thick and gloomy fog hides it. Yes! let Nature put on mourning---your child, your friend, your lover, draws near his end. Charlotte! the ſentiment I now feel, ſtands alone in my mind; it is ſtrongly marked; and yet nothing appears to me more like a dream, than when I ſay, this is the laſt day. The laſt!---Charlotte, I have no idea that correſponds with this word. Laſt! To-day I ſtand upright, I have all my ſtrength; to-morrow, cold and ſtiff, I ſhall lie extended on the ground. What is death? we do but dream when we talk of it. I have ſeen many die; but ſuch are the limits of our feeble nature; we have no clear conceptions of the beginning or end of our exiſtence. At this moment I ſtill poſſeſs myſelf, or rather, deareſt of women! I am thine; and the next---detached, ſeparated---perhaps for ever!---No, Charlotte, no; we now exiſt, how can we be annihilated. What is annihilation: this too is a mere word, a ſound which conveys no idea to my mind:——Dead! Charlotte! ſhut up in a pit, ſo deep, ſo cold, ſo dark. I had a friend who was every thing to me in my helpleſs youth; ſhe died: I followed her hearſe, I ſtood by the ſide of her grave; when the coffin was let down; when I heard the cracking of the cords as they were let down and drawn up; when the firſt ſhovelful of

Digitized by Google

earth was thrown in, and the coffin returned a hollow sound, which grew fainter and fainter till it was all covered in; I threw myself on the ground; my heart was frozen, grieved, rent; but I neither knew what had happened, nor what was to happen to me. Death! Grave! I understand not the words!

Forgive! Forgive!---Yesterday, alas! That moment should have been the last of my life. I am beloved, I am beloved by her; the delightful sense of it for the first time penetrated, enflamed my heart. My lips still feel the sacred warmth they received from thine. New torrents of delight flow in upon my heart. Forgive me, forgive me!

Oh! I knew that I was dear to you; I saw it in the first animated look which you directed to me; I knew it in the first time you pressed my hand; but when I was absent from you, when I saw Albert by your side, my doubts and fears returned.

Do you recollect the flowers you sent me, when at a disagreeable and crowded assembly you could neither speak to me, nor hold out your hand? Half the night I was on my knees before these flowers; they were the pledges of affection; but these impressions grew fainter, and were at length effaced. Every thing passes away; but a whole eternity could not extinguish the flames which was yesterday kindled by your lips, the flame I feel within me. She loves me! these arms have encircled her waist, these lips have trembled upon hers; she is

Digitized by Google

mine.---Yes, Charlotte! you are mine for ever.

Albert is your husband—but what of that? It is for this life only—and in this life only it is a crime to love you, to wish to tear you from him!—This is a crime, and I punish myself for it; I have enjoyed it—I have enjoyed it—I have enjoyed the full delight of it. I drew in a balm which has revived my soul. From this moment you are mine——Yes, Charlotte, you are mine. I go before you, I go to my father, to thy father; I shall carry my sorrows to the foot of his throne, and he will give me comfort till you arrive. Then will I fly to meet you, I will claim you, and remain with you for ever in the presence of the Almighty. I do not dream, I do not rave; drawing near to the grave, my perceptions are more clear. We shall exist, we shall see one another again; we shall see your respected mother; I shall see her, I shall find her out and I shall not be afraid to shew her my heart Your mother! your image!

[About eleven o'clock, Werter asked his servant if Albert was returned: he answered, "Yes;" for he had seen him go by on horseback. Upon which Werter sent him with the following note unsealed:—

"BE so good to lend me your pistols for a journey.——Adieu."

The tender Charlotte had passed the night in great agitation and distress; her blood boiled in her veins, and painful sensations rent her heart. The ardor of Werter's passionate em-

Digitized by Google

braces had, in ſpite of all her efforts, ſtolen into her boſom: at the ſame time ſhe recalled to her memory the days of her tranquility and innocence, and they appeared to her with new charms. She dreaded the looks of her huſband, and the pointed irony of his queſtions, after he had heard of Werter's viſit. She had never been guilty of a falſehood, never had diſſembled, and for the firſt time ſhe felt the neceſſity of it. Her diſtreſs and repugnance made her think her fault more enormous; and yet ſhe could neither hate the author of it, nor even reſolve to ſee him no more. Melancholy and languid, ſhe was ſcarce dreſſed when her huſband came in: his preſence was for the firſt time irkſome to her. She trembled leſt he ſhould perceive that ſhe had been crying and had no ſleep; and this apprehenſion encreaſed her embarraſſment. She received him with a kind of eagerneſs, which rather betrayed remorſe and confuſion, than expreſſed any real ſatisfaction. Albert obſerved it: and after opening ſome letters, he drily aſked her, whether there was any news, and who ſhe had ſeen in his abſence? She anſwered, after ſome heſitation, "Werter ſpent an hour here yeſterday."—"He chooſes his time well," ſaid Albert, and went into his room. Charlotte remained alone for a quarter of an hour. The preſence of a man ſhe eſteemed and loved, gave a new turn to her thoughts; ſhe recollected his kindneſs, the generoſity of his character, his attachment to her; and ſhe reproached herſelf for having ſo ill requited him.

Digitized by Google

A secret impulse prompted her to follow him; she went to his room, and took her work with her, as she sometimes used to do. She asked him when she went in, if he wanted any thing? he said, "No," and began to write: she sat down and worked. Albert from time to time took a few turns up and down the room; and then Charlotte addressed some discourse to him; but he scarcely made her any answer, and sat down again to his bureau. This behaviour was made more painful to her, by her endeavours to hide the concern she felt from it, and to restrain the tears which were every moment ready to flow. They had passed an hour in this irksome situation, when the arrival of Werter's servant compleated Charlotte's distress. As soon as Albert had read the note, he turned coldly to his wife, and said, "Give him the pistols—I wish him a good journey." These words were a thunderstroke to Charlottte; she got up, and tottering walked slowly to the wall, with a trembling hand took down the pistols, and by degrees wiped off the dust. She would have made still more delay, had not a look from Albert obliged her to leave off. She then delivered the fatal arms to the servant, without being able to speak a single word; folded up her work, and went directly to her room, overcome with mortal grief, and her heart forboding dreadful calamities. Sometimes she was on the point of going to her husband, to throw herself at his feet, and to acquaint him with all that had happened the preceding evening;

Digitized by Google

to tell him her fault, and her apprehenſions: but then ſhe foreſaw that it would be uſeleſs, and that Albert would certainly not be perſuaded to go to Werter's houſe. Dinner was ſerved, and a friend of Charlotte's, whom ſhe deſired to ſtay with her, helped to ſupport the converſation. When Werter heard that Charlotte had given the piſtols with her own hand to the ſervant, he received them with tranſport. He eat ſome bread, and drank a glaſs of wine, ſent his ſervant to dinner, and then began to write.]

To Charlotte, *in continuation.*

——They have been in your hands—you wiped the duſt from them; I give them a thouſand kiſſes; you have touched them. Ah! Heaven approves and favours my deſign. It is you, Charlotte, who furniſh me with the fatal inſtruments; I wiſhed to receive my death from your hand, and from your hand I am going to receive it. I have been enquiring of my ſervant—you trembled when you gave him the piſtols; but you did not bid me adieu. Wretched! wretched! that I am!—not one adieu!—In that moment, which unites me to you for ever, can your heart be ſhut againſt me?—Oh! Charlotte! ages cannot wear out the impreſſion; yet I feel that you cannot hate the man who has this paſſionate love for you.

[After dinner he had his trunk packed up, deſtroyed a great many papers, and went out

Digitized by Google

to discharge some trifling debts. He returned home; and then went out again, notwithstanding the rain, first to the Count's garden, and then farther into the country. He returned when night came on, and began to write again.]

—My dear friend, I have for the last time seen the mountains, the forests, and the sky. Adieu!—My dearest mother, forgive me:—my dear friend, I entreat you to comfort her. God bless you! I have settled all my affairs; farewell! We shall see one another again; we shall see one another when we are more happy!

I have but ill-requited you, Albert; and you forgive me. I have disturbed the peace of your family; I have occasioned a want of confidence between you. Adieu! I am going to put an end to all this. May my death remove every obstacle to your happiness! Albert, Albert, make that angel happy; and may the benediction of Heaven be upon you!

[He finished the settling of his papers; tore and burned a great many; others he sealed up and directed to his friend. They contained loose thoughts and maxims, some of which I have seen. At ten o'clock he ordered a fire to be made up, and a pint of wine to be brought to him, and then dismissed his servant; who with the rest of the family lay in another part of the house. The servant lay down in his cloaths, that he might be the sooner ready the next morning; his master

Digitized by Google

having told him that the poſt-horſes would be at the door before ſix o'clock.]

To Charlotte, *in continuation.*

—Paſt eleven o'clock! All is ſilent round me, and my ſoul is calm! I render thanks to thee, O God, that thou granteſt to me in theſe laſt moments warmth and vigour.

I draw near to the window, my dear friend, and through clouds which are driven rapidly along by impetuous winds, I ſee ſome ſtars. Heavenly bodies! You will not fall; the Eternal ſupports both you and me! I have alſo ſeen the greater bear—favourite of all the conſtellations; for when I left you in the evening it uſed to ſhine oppoſite your door. How often have I looked at it with rapture! how often raiſed my hands towards it, and made it a witneſs of my felicity: and ſtill—Oh! Charlotte! What is there which does not bring your image before me? Do you not ſurround me on all ſides; and have not I, like a child, collected together all the little things which you have made ſacred by your touch?

The profile which was ſo dear to me, I return to you, Charlotte; and I pray you to have a regard for it. Thouſands of kiſſes have I imprinted on it, and a thouſand times have I addreſſed myſelf to it as I went out and came in.

I have wrote a note to your father, to beg he will protect my remains. At the corner of the church-yard, which looks towards the

Digitized by Google

fields, there are two lime-trees; it is there I wish to rest; this is in your father's power; and he will do it for his friend. Join your entreaties to mine. Perhaps pious Christians will not chuse that their bodies should be interred near the corpse of an unhappy wretch like me. Ah! let me then be laid in some remote valley, or by the side of the highways, that the priest and the Levite, when they pass my tomb, may lift their eyes to Heaven, and render thanks to the Lord, whilst the Samaritan gives a tear to my fate!

Charlotte!---I do not shudder now that I hold in my hand the fatal instrument of my death. You present it to me, and I do not draw back. All, all, is now finished;---this is the accomplishment of all my hopes; thus all my vows are fulfilled.

Why had I not the satisfaction to die for you, Charlotte? to sacrifice myself for you? And could I restore peace and happiness to your bosom, with what resolution, with what pleasure should I meet my fate! But to a chosen few only it is given to shed their blood for those who are dear to them, and augment their happiness by the sacrifice.

I wish, Charlotte, to be buried in the cloaths I now wear: you have touched them, and they are sacred. I have asked this favour too of your father.---My soul hovers over my grave. My pockets are not to be searched. The knot of pink ribbon, which you wore on your bosom the first time I saw you, surrounded by your children——(Dear children! I

think I see them playing round you; give them a thousand kisses, and tell them the fate of their unfortunate friend. Ah! at that first moment, how strongly was I attracted to you! how unable ever since to loose myself from you!) This knot of ribbon is to be buried with me; you gave it to me on my birth-day.----Be at peace---let me entreat you be at peace.

They are loaded!———The clock strikes twelve!——I go!——Charlotte!——Charlotte!——Farewell!——Farewell!——

[One of the neighbours saw the flash, and heard the report of the pistol; but every thing remaining quiet, he thought no more of it.

At six in the morning his servant went into the room with a candle. He found his master stretched on the floor and weltering in his blood: he took him up in his arms, and spoke to him, but received no answer. Some small symptoms of life still appearing, the servant ran to fetch a surgeon, and then went to Albert's. Charlotte heard the gate-bell ring; an universal tremor seized her; she awaked her husband, and both got up. The servant, all in tears, told them the dreadful event. Charlotte fell senseless at Albert's feet.

When the surgeon came to the unfortunate Werter, he was still lying on the floor, and his pulse beat: but the ball going in above his eye, had pierced through the skull. However, a

Digitized by Google

vein was opened in his arm; the blood came, and he ſtill continued to breathe.

It was ſuppoſed, by the blood round his chair, that he committed this raſh action, as he was ſitting at his bureau; that he afterwards fell on the floor. He was found lying on his back near the window. He was dreſſed in a blue frock and buff waiſtcoat, and had boots on. Every body in the houſe and the neighbourhood, and in ſhort, people from all parts of the town, ran to ſee him. Albert came in——Werter was laid on his bed, his head was bound up, and the paleneſs of death was on his face. There was ſtill ſome ſigns of life; but every moment they expected him to expire. He had drank only one glaſs of wine. Emilia Gallotti was lying open upon his bureau.

I will ſay nothing of Albert's great diſtreſs, nor of the ſituation of Charlotte.—

The old ſteward, as ſoon as he heard of this event, hurried to the houſe: he embraced his dying friend, and wept bitterly. His eldeſt boys ſoon followed him on foot: they threw themſelves on their knees, by the ſide of Werter's bed, in the utmoſt deſpair, and kiſſed his hands and face. The eldeſt, who was his favourite, held him in his arms till he expired; and even then he was taken away by force. At twelve Werter breathed his laſt. The ſteward by his preſence and precautions, prevented any diſturbance amongſt the populace; and in the night the body of Werter was buried in the place he had himſelf choſen.

Digitized by Google

The steward and his sons followed him to the grave. Albert was not able to do it. Charlotte's life was despaired of.——The body was carried by labourers, and no priest attended.

FINIS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google